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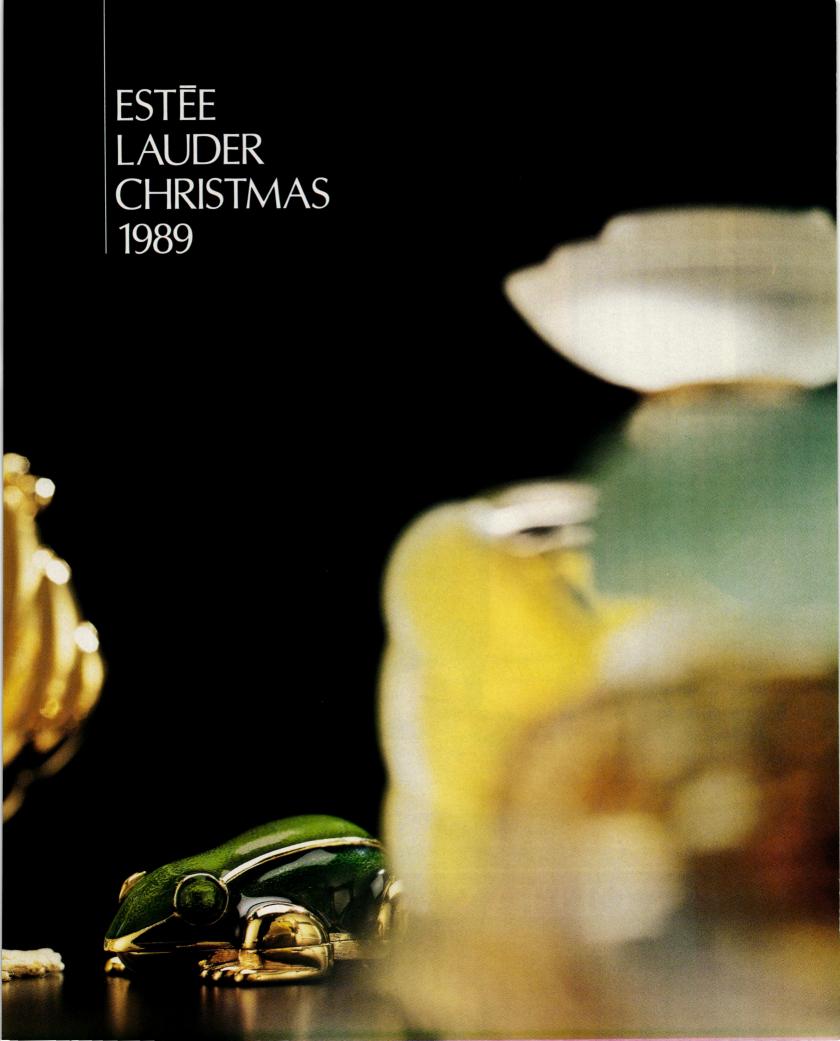
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Featured above: Wedgwood's "1988 Christmas Tree" and "1989 Angel" Jasper ®ware ornaments. For giftware brochure send \$1.00 to Wedgwood, 41 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10010. © Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, Inc. 1989.

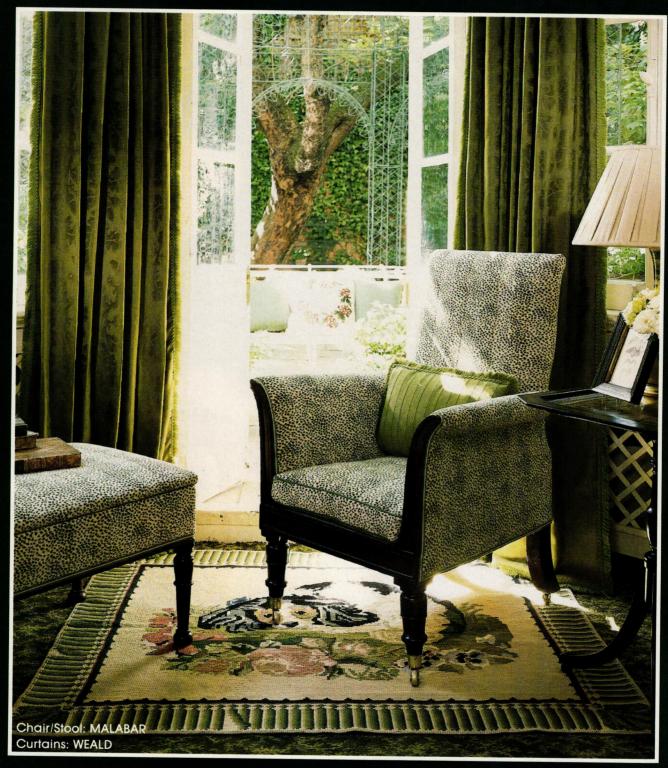






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"I know it sounds trite, but haven't we met before?"

It was a voice that had echoed in her mind for the last month. She tried not to turn too quickly.

"It was Rome...the Eden," she said simply, afraid her voice might sound too eager.

"They gave you my key by mistake...we briefly shared the same room," she added.

"Yes!" he said, finally, as if he had thought about it often. "Too briefly." GUCCI

GUCCI NOBILE for men

#### HOUSE & GARDEN DECEMBER 1989

Volume 161, Number 12

COVER A vine-covered arch frames a view of the pool and Tuscan-style cutting garden of the Villa Narcissa, a southern California estate. Page 124. Photograph by Langdon Clay.



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Donald and Ivana Trump bring back the glory of Mar-a-Lago, the former Palm Beach estate of Marjorie Merriweather Post, below. Page 110. Photograph by UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos.





Architects Peter Shelton and Lee Mindel transform art collectors Jerry and Emily Spiegel's Manhattan apartment into a private museum, <u>above</u>. Behind a Charles X table and Consulat chairs, A. R. Penck's The Future of the Immigrant dominates the living room wall. Page 132. Photograph by Michael Mundy.

The Cultivated Beene The fashion designer's house and garden reflect his unerring eye for luxurious detail. By Wendy Goodman 88

**Eloquent Bouquets** Dutch flower paintings speak of the passions of the Golden Age. By Rosamond Bernier **96** 

**Victorian Revival** For a Philadelphia family, Robert Denning reinterprets the grand style of an earlier era. By Brooks Adams **102** 

**The Palm Beach Story** In 1927 cereal heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post built Mar-a-Lago, the ultimate castle in the sand. Fifty-nine years later, Ivana Trump moved in. By Charles Gandee **110** 

**Restoration Drama** Decorator David Roos sets the stage for life in his London town house. By Stephen Calloway 120

Mediterranean Light Elin Vanderlip's southern California garden is classically Italian. By Paula Deitz 124

Making Room for Art Peter Shelton and Lee Mindel create a grand backdrop for art of the eighties. By Joseph Giovannini 132

Island of Calm Chessy Rayner's Saint Martin retreat is a study in elegant simplicity. By Barbara Howar 140

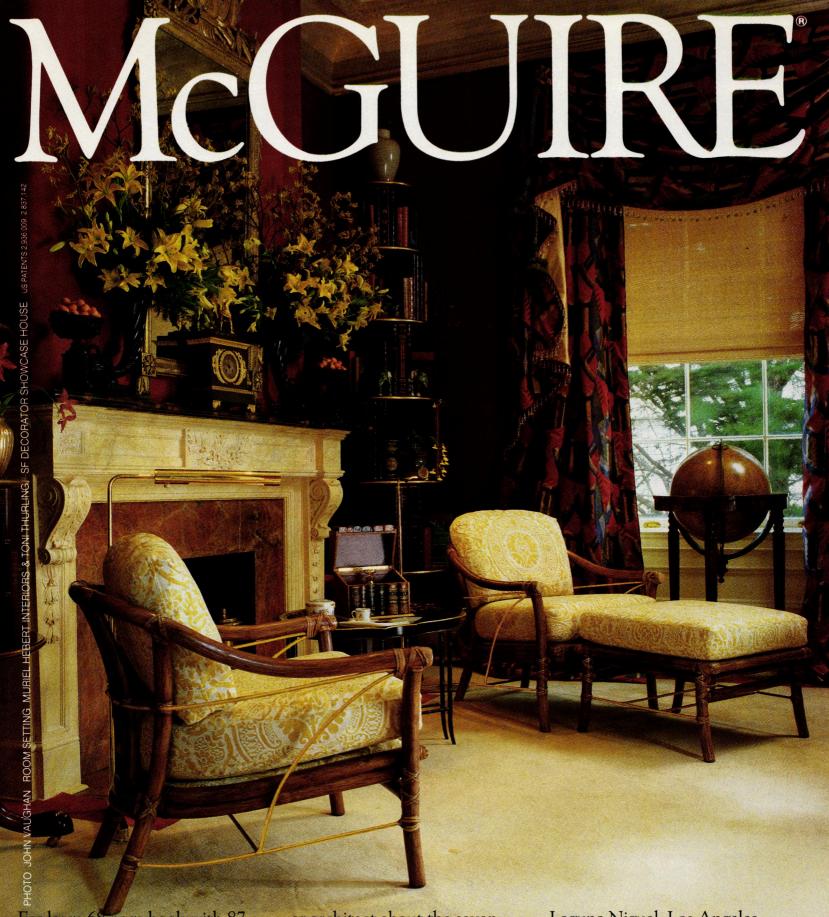
**The Well-Tempered Robot** No longer lost in space, mechanical wonders come down to earth to relieve domestic drudgery. By Kent Black **146** 

Framer's Art Roger Lussier recasts his Back Bay apartment as a luminous self-portrait. By Susan Barron 150

**Colorado Cabin Fever** A 1930s log house captures the romance of home on the range. By Margot Guralnick **158** 



Antique Christmas ornaments, above, add oldworld craftsmanship to modern holiday celebrations. Page 53. Photograph by Lars Klove.



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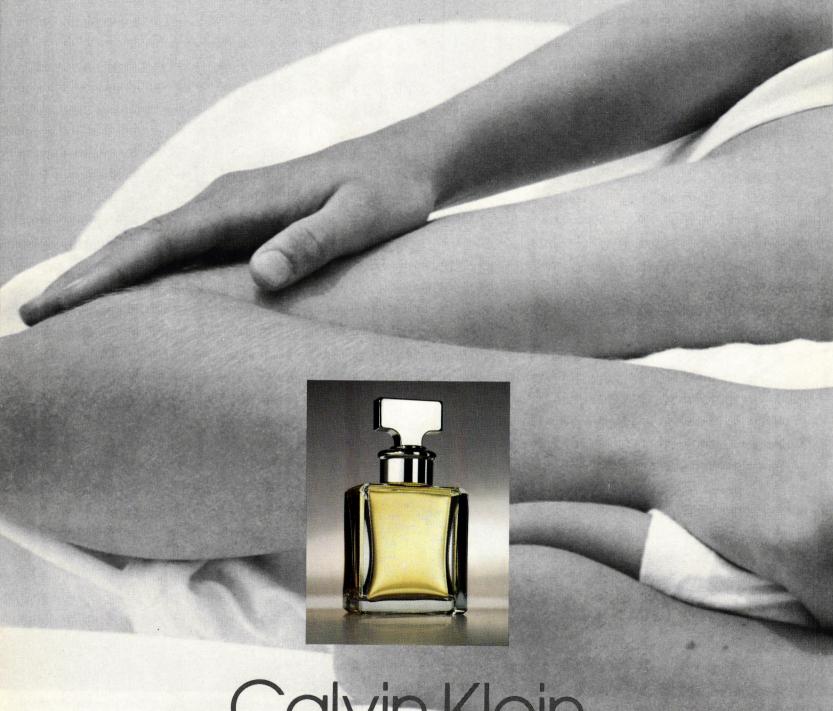
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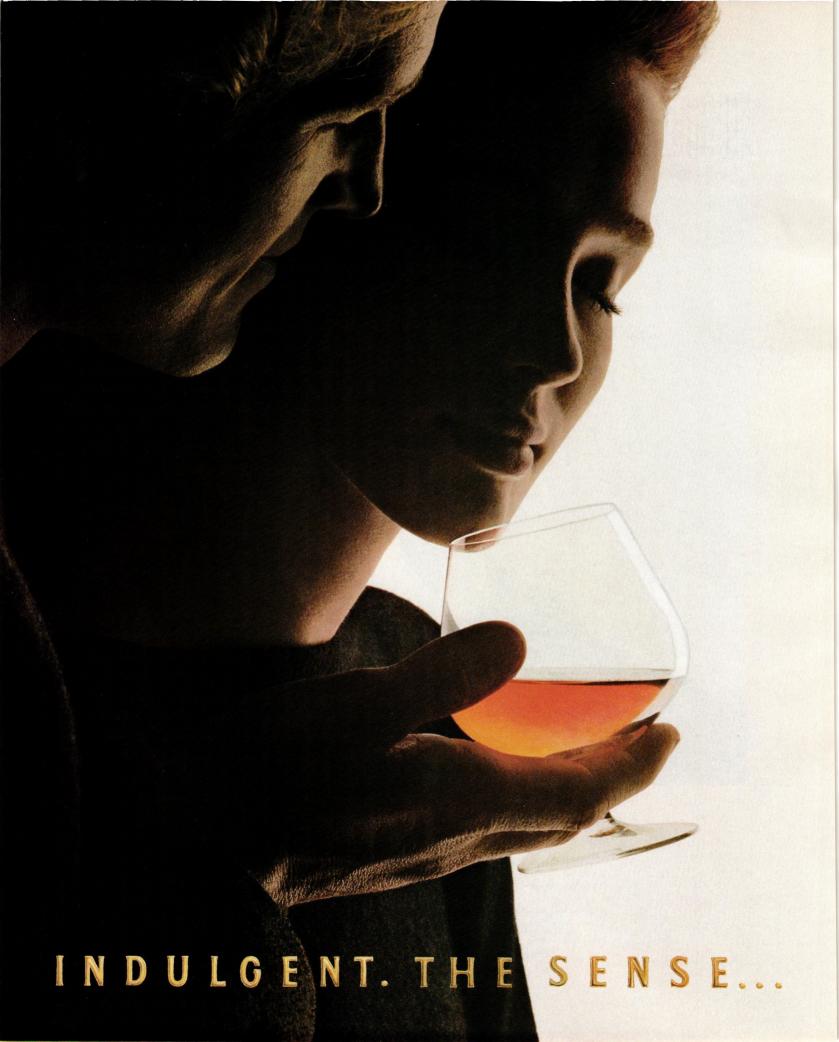
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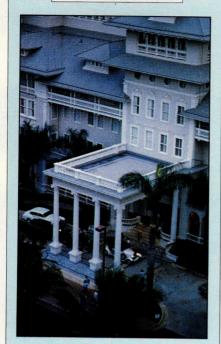


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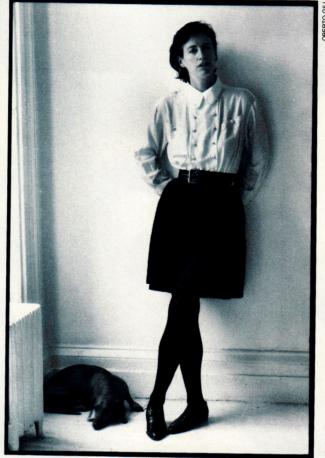
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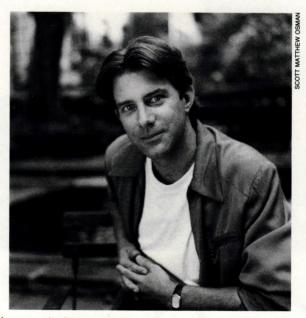
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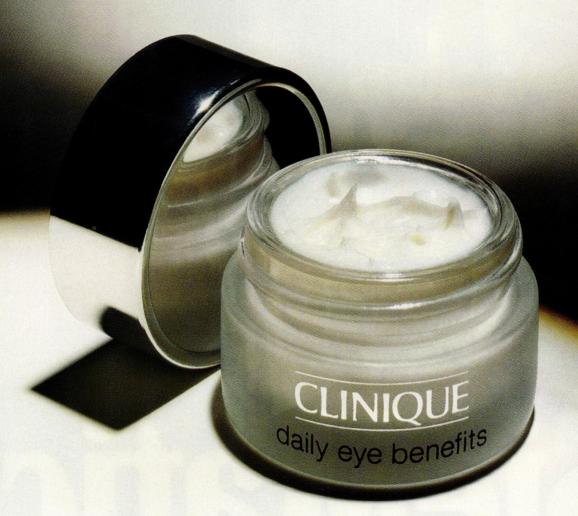
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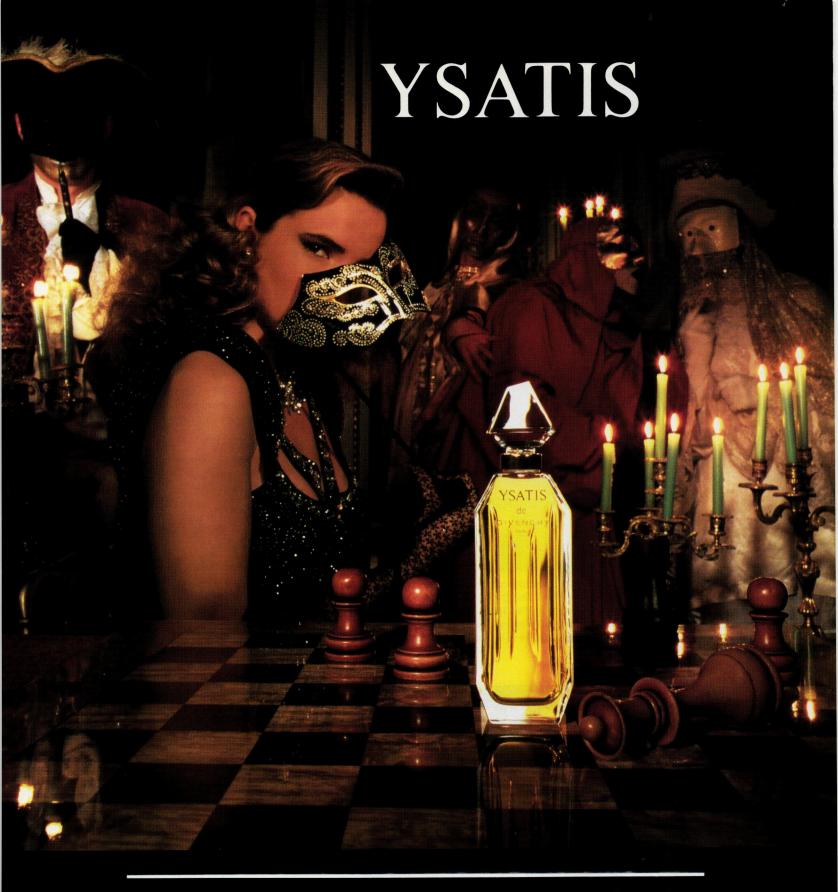
Wendy Goodman joins HG as style editor (from New York magazine where she was fashion editor) to track trends in fashion and design. For this issue she reports on Geoffrey Beene's Long Island house, "which perfectly illustrates the way style carries over to all aspects of a person's life. The innovation and experimentation with fabric that Beene's clothing is renowned for is also evident in the decoration of his house."



**Kent Black,** who wrote the feature on robots, has always favored topics that run to the unusual. "The most bizarre situation can become wonderfully mundane," says Black. "Like asking a person if his alien abductor paid for dinner with Visa or American Express. But what is even stranger is to be assigned a story on the American Stock Exchange and find yourself in a Manhattan restaurant discussing the price of pork bellies. Then the chills run up your spine, and you think, 'Now this is weird.'"







GIVENCHY

I. MAGNIN

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#### **CONTRIBUTORS NOTES**



Barbara Howar is a television journalist and author who regularly reports on politicians, rock stars, and other oddities. For this month's HG she visited decorator Chessy Rayner's Caribbean retreat. "I've never written about an inanimate object before, but houses are really just like people," says Howar. "Although I hadn't realized it, I've had a distinct feeling about every house I've ever been in."



**Olivier Bernier** has written extensively on eighteenth century and early nineteenth century France. His most recent book, *Words of Fire*, *Deeds of Blood: The Mob*, *the Monarchy*, *and the French Revolution*, was published in May. In the "Decoration" column, he tells how Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine invented not only the Empire style and its glorification of Napoleon but also the modern notion of the interior decorator.

Susan Barron, a contributing editor of New England Monthly, reports on framer Roger Lussier's luminous apartment in Boston. "It is a self-created world where the wish is fulfilled," says Barron. "I was spared the randomness you encounter in the outside world. The only problem was that visiting it made it hard to come back to my own apartment."



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mysor santal and the rarest of the rare, *Osmanthus* from China. Osmanthus blooms for a short time each Spring, and it can be found at a market in Canton.

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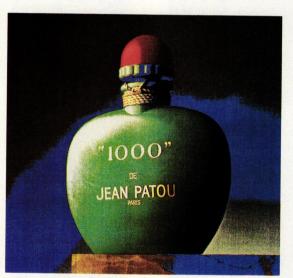
and knotted by hand. (Each knot identifies the woman who tied it —Marie's half-hitch is distinct from Jacqueline's square knot; Jacqueline's square knot bears no resemblance to Jeanine's bowline, and so on.)

"1000" de Jean Patou is a *limited edition* fragrance. The year's harvest dictates the quantity produced. And as is the case with

etchings and limited edition books, each bottle is *registered* and accompanied by a numbered card.

True, "1000" de Jean Patou won't find its way to every dressing table. *Elusiveness* is part of its charm. But to those who secure this exceptional fragrance, a gentle word of warning:

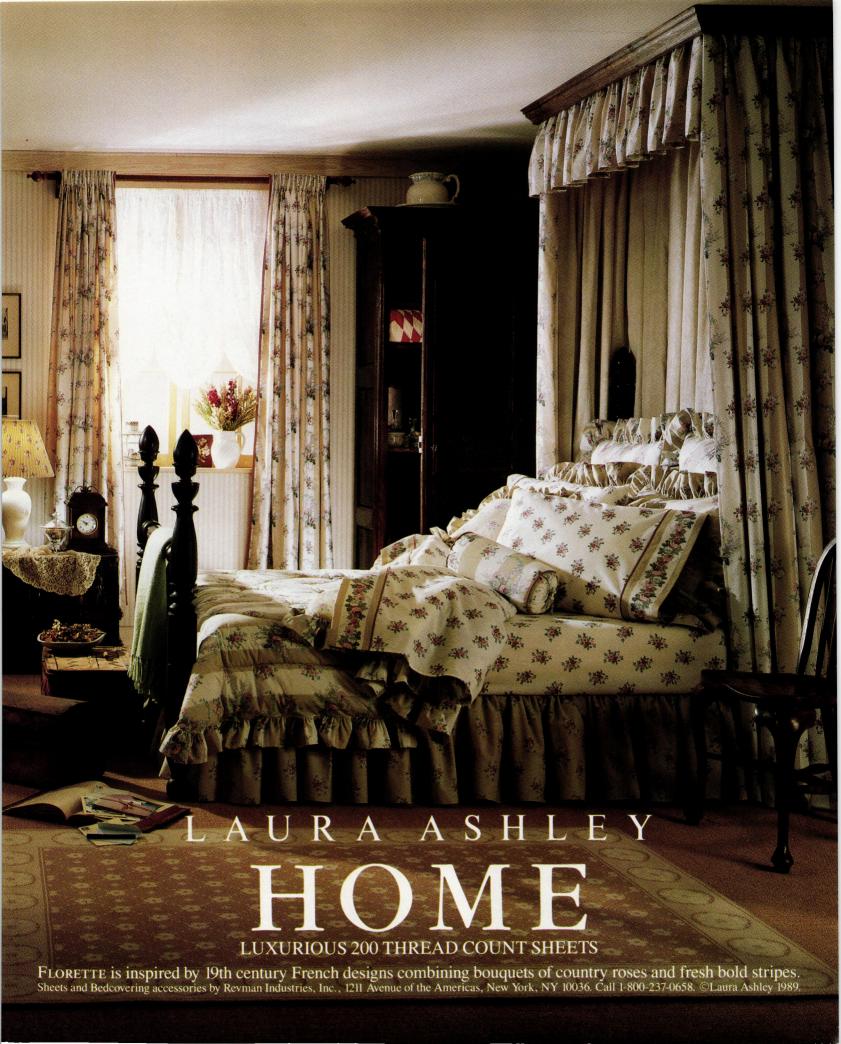
An introduction spells certain addiction. For "1000" de Jean Patou is one in a million.



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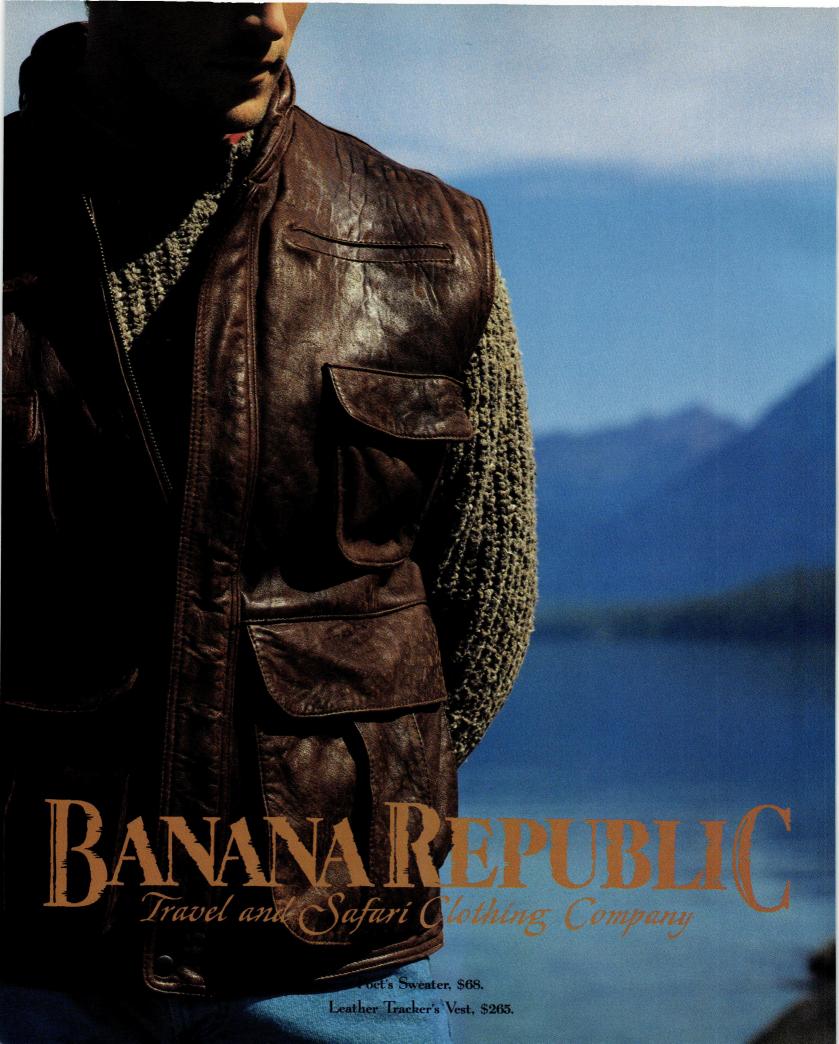


# Merry Christmas from Marlboro Country



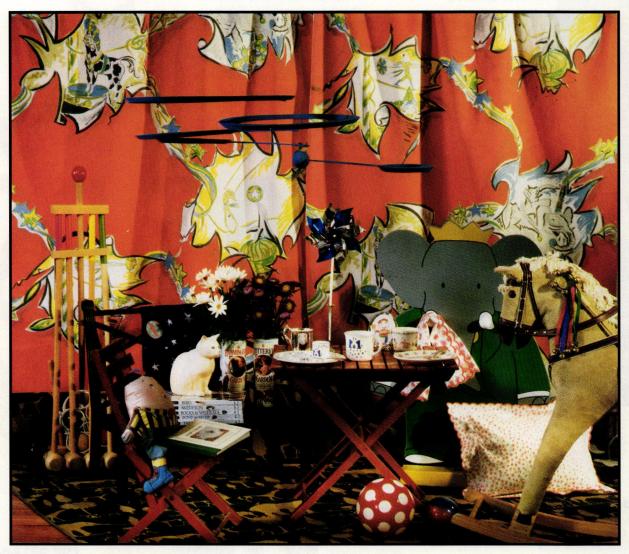
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# HG reports on the new and the noteworthy.

Edited by Heather Smith MacIsaac



MAKING MERRY Even Scrooge couldn't say "Humbug!" to this charming array of treats for children. Kent Bragaline's Circus fabric sets the stage for the croquet set, Babar clothes tree, and corduroy rocking horse (above) from Conran's. A Winterthur Collection bench (below left) from Zona supports artist Rima Smyth's hand-painted chamois baby blanket, a cat-shaped night-light, plus garden seeds and Knopf's Eyewitness Books series from the Nature Company. An antique red folding chair and table from Judith & James Milne are set for tea (below right) with Cartier's silver fork and spoon and bejeweled plate, cup, and two-handled mug. The playful setting to the right is from Laura Ashley Home, and the baby spoon is from the Museum of Modern Art Design Store. The Winnie-the-Pooh picture frame and mug are new from Reed & Barton. Next to a wacky Lysiane Luong chair cover (below center), from Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art Store, an Eddy Lamp is balanced atop a wire basket from Dot Zero. Details see Resources.







#### **RUG REDUX** Inspired by the September 1988 HG article on Aubusson carpets, John Lyle of Lyle & Umbach decided to create his own version of the classic by dying and hand-painting Neoclassical designs on sisal. The For Artemis rug (left), \$4,200, is available at Luten Clarey Stern, NYC.

#### **SWEET DREAMS**

Gaetano Pesce cooked up the idea for his Strawberry bed (right) for the exhibit "Edible Architecture/Delicious Designs" (Nov. 15–Dec. 12) at the Steelcase Design Partnership, NYC. Confectionary translations of selected designs will be auctioned along with the drawings at Sotheby's (Dec. 14) to benefit the Design Industries Foundation for AIDS.



#### GLASS MÉNAGE

Artist Jose
Chardiet used a
kaleidoscope of
color in his 8inch solid glass
house (right),
\$900, made for
the 21st annual
Celebration of
American Crafts
(Nov. 13-Dec. 23)
at the Creative
Arts Workshop,
New Haven (203)
562-4927.



Jeweler Mish Tworkowski translates his appreciation for architectural details, such as cornices, columns, and rosettes, into necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. The design (above) is based on a fireplace colonnette found in Baltimore's Homewood, a historic house restored by owner Johns Hopkins University. At Barneys New York, \$350 a pair.

#### HOLIDAY SALUTE

Holiday spirit spills from a new Reed & Barton silver-plated panel vase, \$200 (below); for nearest store call (800) 343-1383. Hermès salutes the season with its Neige d'Antan scarf, \$175, sporting skiers, snowflakes, and holly sprigs on silk; available in nine colors.



For clothing designer Joan Vass, whose flagship store is opening in New York, fashioning the right environment for her collection is as important as the cut of the cloth. Her shop (left), by Monaghan Design, is at 139



#### TALE OF TWO CITIES

Tour Venice and London via the canvases of the great Venetian painter Canaletto, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Nov. 2-Jan. 21, 1990). Sponsored by Louis Vuitton, the exhibition features famous views, like London: Westminster Abbey (left), which established Canaletto's reputation as a superb cityscape artist.



"Companion pieces make the best houseguests," says New York artist Edward Steele of his life-size freestanding figures (right), \$3,000. Each piece is hand-painted on canvas, mounted on board, and backed in velvet. Call (914) 779-8226.



REE & EVELY

#### WINTER WRAP

Fendi is opening its first U.S. shop at 720 Fifth Avenue, NYC, in the exclusive company of Tiffany, Bulgari, and Asprey, with a selection of luxurious items that includes the cashmere shawl bordered in hand-fashioned fur roses, \$4,900 (above), and the deep purple punched wool shawl trimmed in matching silver fox, \$2,650, which spill from a collapsible suitcase (available in three sizes), \$495-\$570.



#### STARRY NIGHT IN KANSAS CITY

New York decorators Tice Alexander, Thomas Britt, Melvin Dwork, Richard Neas, Richard Ridge, and John Saladino return home to Kansas City, Mo., this month to decorate rooms for a museum benefit. Dwork's rendering of the stairway landing (above) incorporates an Italian garden maze. At the Nelson-Atkins Museum (Dec. 2).

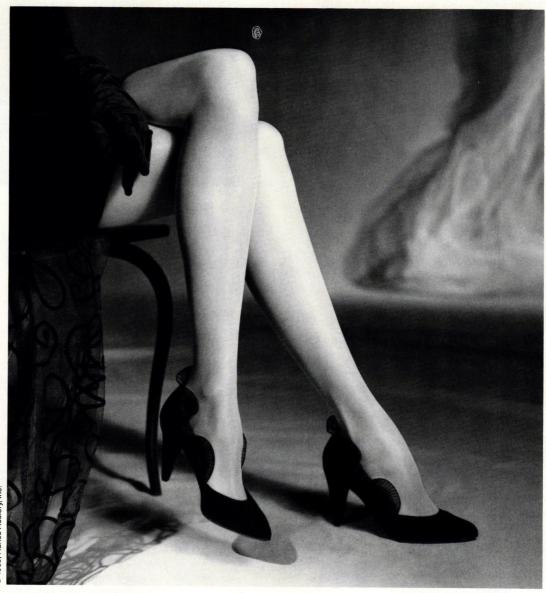


Hand-finished with unique glazes, Janna Ugone's work, like the ceramic table lamp (above), \$290, reflects her interest in geometric form and warm colors. Available to order at MOCA, Los Angeles (213) 621-1710.

#### FEAST FOR THE SENSES

The company that elevated comestibles and toiletries to new heights of charm with collectible packaging now turns its talents to cuisine with the Crabtree & Evelyn Cookbook: A Book of Light Meals and Small Feasts (left), \$29.95, recently published by Stewart, Tabori & Chang.

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of the ego.



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DESIGN

# **Coming Home**

Swid Powell gets comfortable with new markets and intimate quarters By Heather Smith MacIsaac

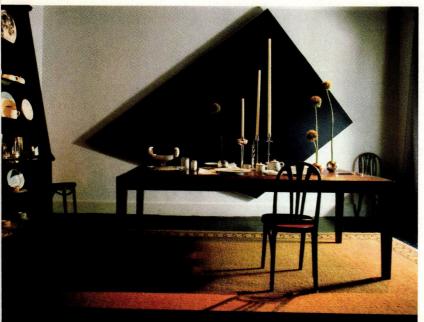
year and a half ago Swid
Powell, a firm known for its fine
modern china, crystal, and silver, moved
out of its penthouse on 57th Street in Manhattan because "the building was coming

down." One might view impending demolition as no small inconvenience, but as Nan Swid and Addie Powell saw it,

nothing could have been more timely. For the partners who barely four years before had offered, in their own modest words, "a new perspective"—a perspective

A silver candy dish, top, by
Michael Graves joins the
line of architect- and
artist-designed wares
developed by Swid Powell.
Right: Partners Nan Swid
and Addie Powell in the
showroom of their offices
decorated by Stephen Sills.





that turned the tabletop market upside down—it was a matter of having outgrown not simply space but some of their original stylistic precepts. Another perspective was in order: a move to East 49th Street marked their first step in a different direction.

Swid Powell's new quarters represent both a nesting and a branching out. Along with the two partners and Marc Hacker, vice president of design and development, ten employees occupy a town house formerly the residence of decorator Billy Baldwin in Amster Yard, a group of landmark buildings said to have been a stagecoach depot. "Though this is far from a full-service building," says Swid, "it more than makes up for that in scale and charm. We just couldn't see ourselves in a high rise." But, adds Powell, "the minute we walked into this building, we could see ourselves here."

Swid and Powell hired Joe D'Urso to orga-

nize the functional layout of the interior. The lower floor houses a reception area, a street-side showroom, and the partners' office which overlooks a shady court-yard. Upstairs are spaces devoted to behind-the-scenes business operations and a generous terrace where meetings, lunches,

and presentations take place in good weather.

After D'Urso came decorator Stephen Sills and his associate James Huniford, who transformed the home of Baldwin into the house of Swid Powell. Sills fashioned an interior "with a point of view—very pure, very functional, but very stylish." In two former parlors he painted the ceilings a deep matte green black, stained the hardwood floors almost ebony, and laid sisal rugs stenciled in an Art Nouveau motif. In the partners' office, four antique Lloyd Loom wicker chairs painted army orange and green are paired with Saarinen tables from Knoll to form a sitting area near one of the building's four working fireplaces. A Hoffmann bookcase by the window holds prototypes, and antique cocktail shakers stand on the mantelpiece below a drawing by Bryan Hunt.

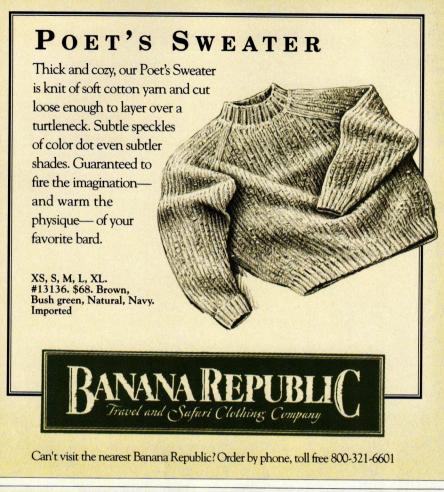
Swid Powell's new perspective comes into sharper focus in the showroom. "When we started our business we were living with black granite and black Formica," recalls Swid. "Our plates, hung in rows on bare white walls, were the decoration." With the new

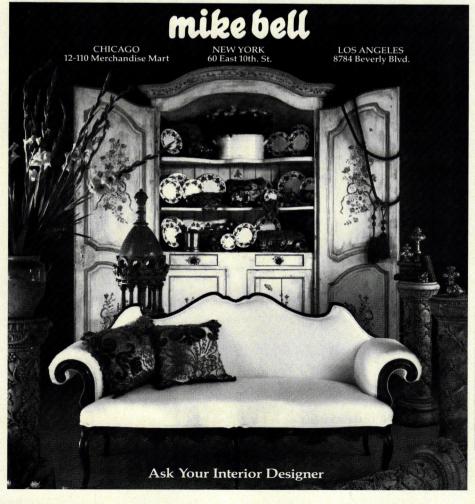
Place mats and napkins, above, will be in the stores by Christmas. Left: Swid Powell products grace an antique table and a cabinet designed by Sills. Details see Resources.

showroom, however, Powell explains, "we wanted to convey that our products are for living with—pictures go in picture frames, plates go on the table with place mats and candlesticks. Our things, though modern, need not be confined to a contemporary setting. They can mix with pieces from any period."

Which is just what they do in the hands of Stephen Sills. An array of products is continually rearranged on a round wicker table from Swid's house and a long oak table that Sills limed and then





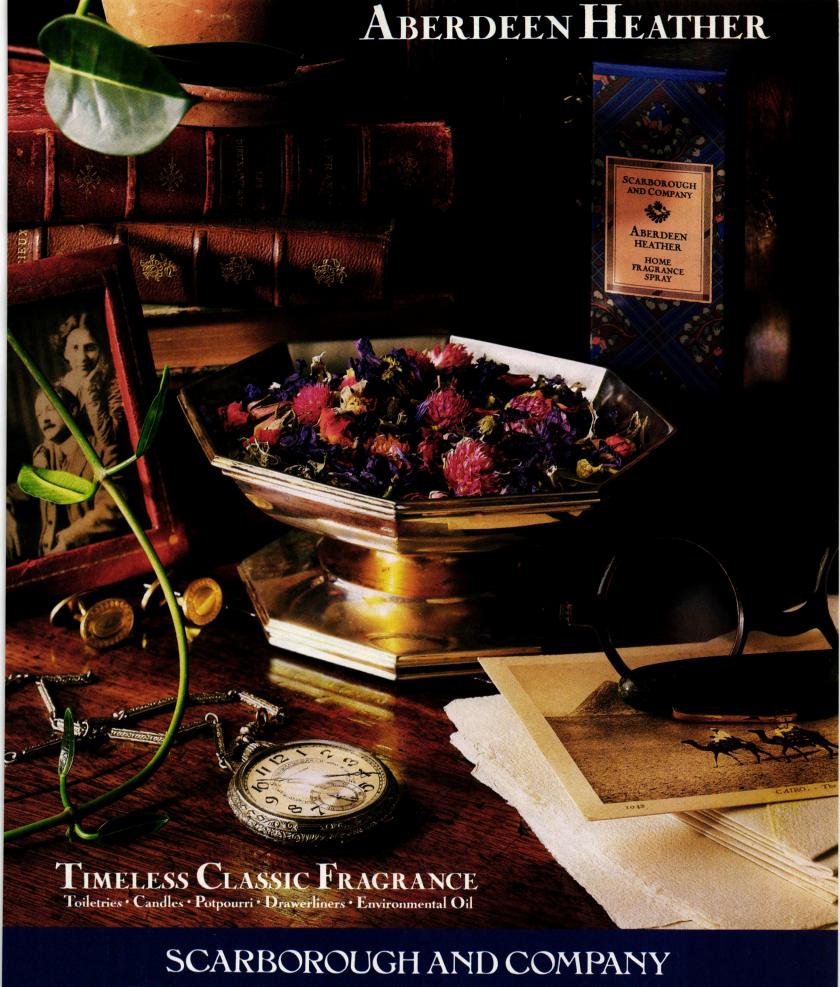


#### NOTES

stained a chocolate color to produce a finish favored by Jean-Michel Frank. Eighteenthcentury mirrored obelisk cabinets that Sills saw in Paris inspired the four display cases of stained mahogany topped by mercury globes. Sheer violet curtains suspended from a chrome rod represent the ultimate straying from Swid Powell's previously pure modern course. "We never, but never, had curtains," states Powell. "But Stephen felt the street-side windows demanded another laver. He was right—the curtains are right and it all hangs together beautifully. Our new home has changed the tone of our business. We've gone from a one-room start-up to being much more established."



And being more established means that Swid Powell can afford to continue to take risks. The firm has entered into several licensing agreements: new table linens will be in the stores by Christmas, sheets and towels produced by Cannon Mills will debut early next year, as will silver-plate serving pieces by Reed & Barton. A new hotel and restaurant division, headed by Carina Courtright, is working with Gwathmey Siegel on china, crystal, and flatware for the smallest tables Swid Powell has encountered thus farthose in the first-class section of select American Airlines flights. Which only goes to show that in the rapidly expanding domestic landscape of Nan Swid and Addie Powell even the sky's no limit.



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# **DECORATION**

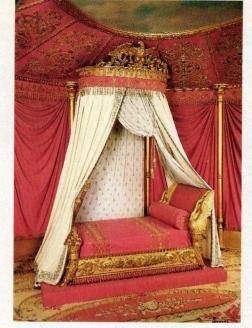
# **Building an Empire**

While creating Napoleon's imperial style, Percier and Fontaine originated a profession By Olivier Bernier

apoleon liked them, but so did Louis XVIII, the restored Bourbon king; Jacob, the great ébéniste, thought highly of them and owed them many commissions; the rich from all over Europe begged them to take on their houses. It was no wonder, really.

While others in France were engaged in making a political and economic revolution, Charles Percier and Pierre Fontaine invented the notion of decorating an entire interior, and as soon as things quieted down again, it became clear that they had also come up with an appropriate and appealing new look.

To them, of course, what we now call the Empire style was simply a return to good taste. Heavily influenced by a long stay in Rome, where they studied and drew the remains of antiquity, the two friends rejected what they saw as the errors of their time. Instead, their historicizing style-Postmod-



The empress Josephine's state bedroom at Malmaison, left, combines typical Percier and Fontaine motifs: the imperial eagle, swans, cornucopias, and the tent. Below: Views of a chair and allegorical figures from the Recueil des décorations intérieures, the designers' compilation of room decorations. furniture, and objects.

ern, one might almost call it-depended on updated ancient Roman forms: urns, tripods, ram's heads and hooves on furniture, and walls frescoed with rural scenes. As it turned out, Percier and Fontaine were right on time. The leaders of the Revolution and Napoleon,

> who was first consul before becoming emperor, all drew on ancient Roman sources. And in the decorative arts the craze for things Roman had been firmly established by the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Still, Percier and Fontaine created something very new and very convenient. Architects by training, inseparable colleagues by choice, they

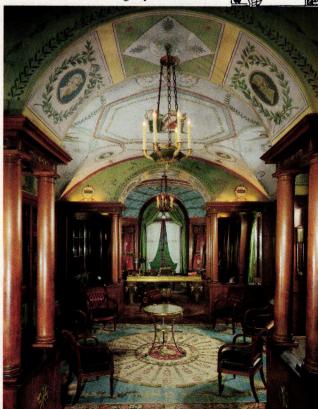
> built almost nothing; instead, they took existing buildings and designed total modern decoration schemes, something no one had ever thought of doing before. And the two men's different talents perfectly complemented each other. Fontaine was outgoing, diplomatic with difficult patrons, and quick to conceive

a grand scheme. Percier was shy, retiring, and masterly with fashionable detail. Here was the perfect service for the busy emperor and his followers: time,

taste, and involvement were not required of the client.

Even better, Percier and Fontaine could work very fast. "The first consul asked us to decorate a council son]," Fontaine

room [at Malmainoted in his journal.



Influenced by Pompeian interiors, Napoleon's study at Malmaison, left, was designed to make a small space impressive. The furniture is by Jacob-Desmalter.



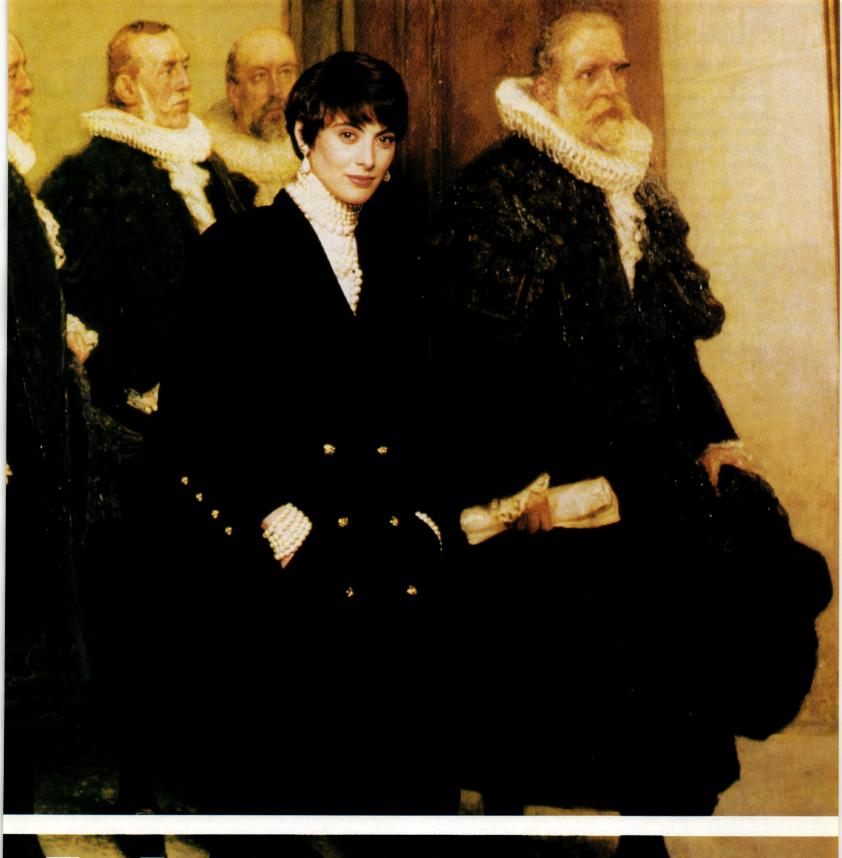
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#### **DECORATION**

"The plan and the decoration itself had to be completed within ten working days because he did not want to put off the frequent stays he made there, and thus it seemed the right thing to adapt the structure of a tent held up by pikes and flagpoles to this room." It was appropriate: Bonaparte was, after all, a soldier who spent a good deal of his life in tents. It was also a stroke of genius: from then on tents became one of the great resources of interior decoration.

The tent was adorned with trophies made of arms that had been used by other conquering empires. Indeed, the Empire style took its motifs from two main themes: war (pikes, tents, flags) and ancient civilizations (Egyptian sphinxes, Roman palmettes, Pompeian candelabra)—all this with a liberal admixture of Josephine's favorite

bird, the swan. These motifs appear as well in the furniture made, most often to Percier and Fontaine's design, by Jacob and his son, Jacob-Desmalter. As seemed suitable to the bluntness of a military regime, the forms usually remained simple: the chairs had straight legs and backs; the tables, often



The dining room at Malmaison, above, was an early Percier and Fontaine commission. Here, too, antiquity is brought up to date: Pompeian red walls, lyres, tripods, and nymphs join with faux marbre and Jacob-Desmalter furniture. Left: Josephine's private bedroom.

made of mahogany, were plain. Only the occasional curvedneck swan added a note of fantasy to chair arm or bed board.

Malmaison itself was not Percier and Fontaine's first triumph. The Convention may have voted the Terror in 1793, but it was just as aware of the importance of decor as the rest of the French. The commission to design and furnish a new chamber for that dauntless Assembly was given to Percier and Fontaine, and the result was successful enough to make the deputies forget, temporarily, the guillotine. Still, it was Josephine's commission that really launched them. Malmaison is a rather dour-looking seventeenth-century house barely big enough to be called a château. Josephine, who liked the good life, bought it while Napoleon was in Egypt and decided it must be completely redone. Only the fact that she had borrowed every penny of the purchase and redecoration cost stopped her from

agreeing to raze the existing structure and rebuild the house from scratch, as Percier and Fontaine had suggested. Napoleon, ever parsimonious, complained bitterly when he found out what his wife had spent but liked the results so much that the work was allowed to continue. The result, now admirably restored, is one of the most charming interiors in France.

Tents play an important role, of course. Aside from the council room at Malmaison, there is also a painted metal tent outside the main entrance which once served as a waiting room for the consul's aides-de-camp. That, however, is only one of the many innovations in the house. There is the study with small barrel vaults frescoed with Pompeian-inspired motifs so that within a modest space one

feels as if one were in a very grand room. Again, the dining room with its trompe l'oeil scenes of life in ancient Rome and Roman-inspired chairs has an air of cheerful majesty in spite of its size and rather dark exposure. There is an occasional lush piece, such as the round table whose top is made of Sèvres porcelain portraits of the marshals of France clustered around the emperor. Josephine remained true to Percier and Fontaine's style in the later redecoration of her bed-

room, with its gilded bed, eagle-topped canopy, and skylike ceiling.

Luckily for Percier and Fontaine, Napoleon was quick to recognize talent and to use it. Preoccupied with conquering Europe, the emperor never had time to build much. What he wanted, therefore, was to redo existing palaces, and nothing could better have suited Percier and Fontaine's particular bent.

"Furniture," they wrote, "is too closely linked to the decoration of interiors for the architect to ignore it.... The structure of a building is what bones are to the human body; it must be embellished but not completely hidden." Embellish they did. First they were put in charge of the palace of Saint-Cloud, which was to serve Napoleon as a replacement for Malmaison when it became inconveniently small. Magnificence rather than trompe l'oeil grandeur was now the order of the day; the emperor had to be seen with just the right degree of pomp. This was even more true in Paris itself. The palace of the Tuileries had suffered from the Revolution, so a banquet room and two galleries in which Napoleon could hold court were added, along with a new grand staircase in the wing connecting the Tuileries to the Louvre. That galleries should have been added rather than rooms proved Percier and Fontaine's understanding of the new regime: the emperor was given to reviewing his court as he did his troops. Lined along the two sides of these indoor parade grounds, the ladies—the men stood behind them—watched with apprehension as the emperor looked at them sharply and criticized their dress.

Besides the many private commissions Percier and Fontaine received, there were palaces to be redecorated all over Europe—Laeken outside Brussels, the Lateran in Rome, the Pitti in Florence—

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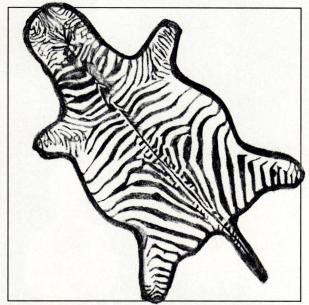
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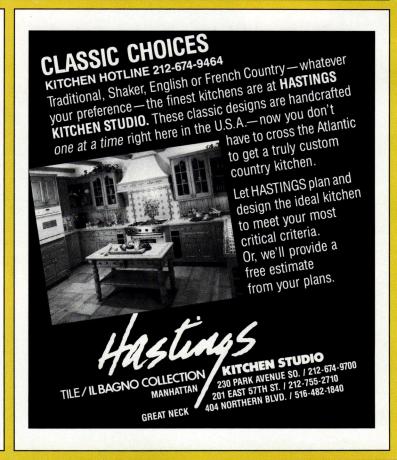
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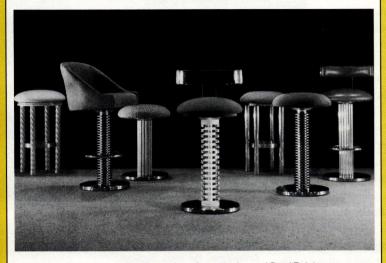
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#### **DECORATION**

although, in most cases, Napoleon's fall came too soon for the plans to be carried out. In France proper there was the Grand Trianon (deplorably redone in pastiche Empire at the behest of General de Gaulle) and the palace of Compiègne north of Paris.

As the result of the recent and splendid restoration undertaken at Compiègne in the last few years, we can once again see just how good Percier and Fontaine were when they worked on a larger scale. Whether it is the allwhite bathroom of the empress Marie Louise with its languorous voile draperies or her state bedroom, the splendors of the Empire shine forth undimmed. The bed, with its lifesize carved figures and its triple white and gold curtains topped by ostrich plumes, is less a piece of furniture than a monument.

Busy as they were with actual commissions, however, Percier and Fontaine also tried to make their style available to wouldbe clients. Their Recueil des décorations intérieures not only publicized, in a series of admirably stylish line drawings, some of their greatest successes, it also offered designs for rooms, furniture, and decorative objects and had an enormous influence on the look of interiors all over Europe.

The Recueil was permanent. But another major aspect of the two friends' work was not: as well as redoing the imperial palaces,

they were asked by Napoleon to design the regime's most splendid celebrations. They were responsible for the Neoclassical decor superimposed on Nôtre Dame's then unfashionable Gothic style for the coronation of Napoleon and Josephine (we know just what it looked like thanks to David's huge and justly famous depiction of that scene). After that, every major public event required a Percier and Fontaine set. These are long gone, except for one monumental decoration, the charming pink marble arch of triumph of the Carrousel, which served as a grand doorway to the palace of the

Tuileries' courtyard. Today the arch, less a Roman pastiche than a new variation on an old theme, adorns the space between the two wings of the Louvre. Unlike all its predecessors the arch has side openings as well, which make it both light and elegant. It is

not a major construction, but there is a good deal to be said for this graceful rethinking of the antique, and it is, in the end, a fitting monument to its ingenious designers.



Roman splendor befitted the king of Rome, Napoleon's son. For his apartment at the palace of Compiègne, the stone bathtub set in a Classical colonnade was adapted from an ancient mural.

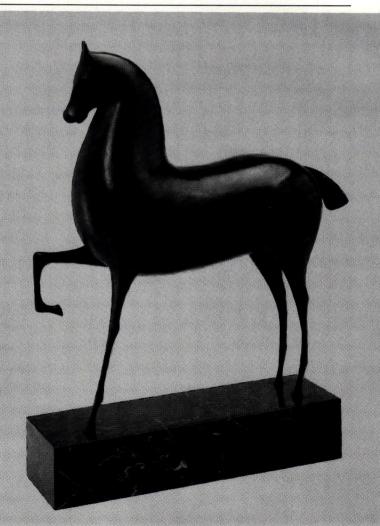
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Elie Nadelman, Horse, bronze, circa 1914, 123/4 in (32.4 cm.) high, on veined green marble base, blackish brown patina. Estimate: \$100,000-150,000

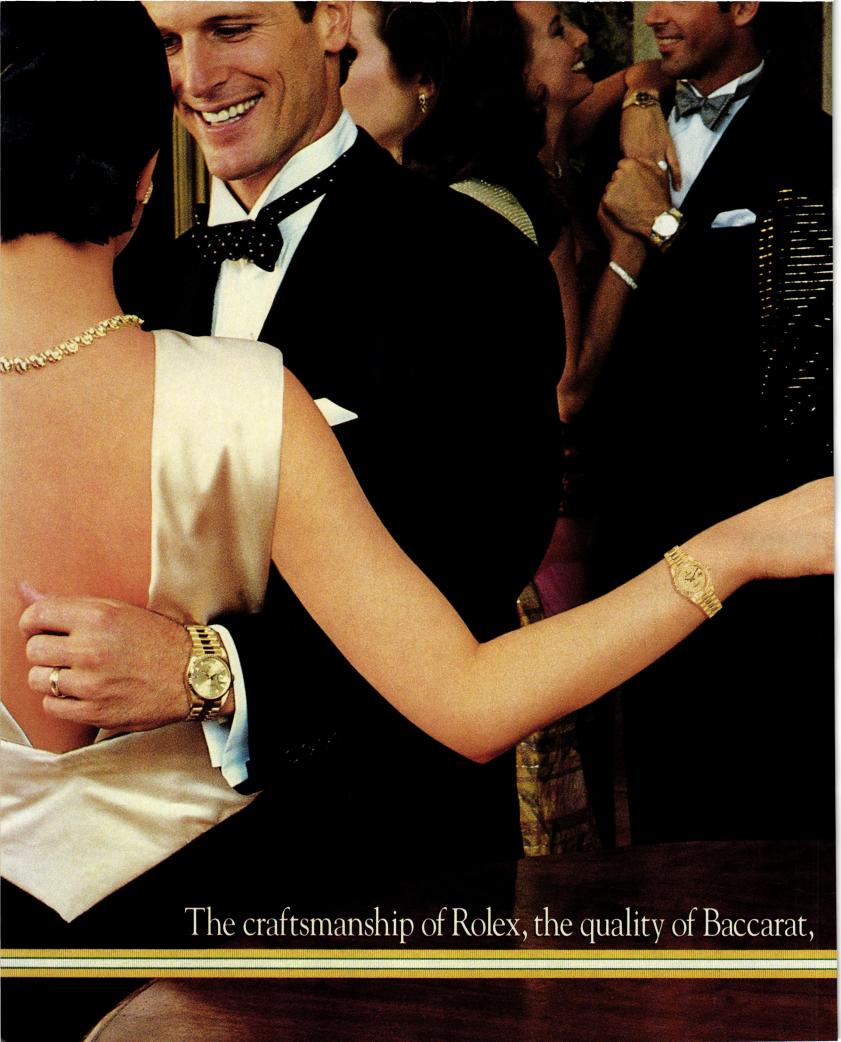


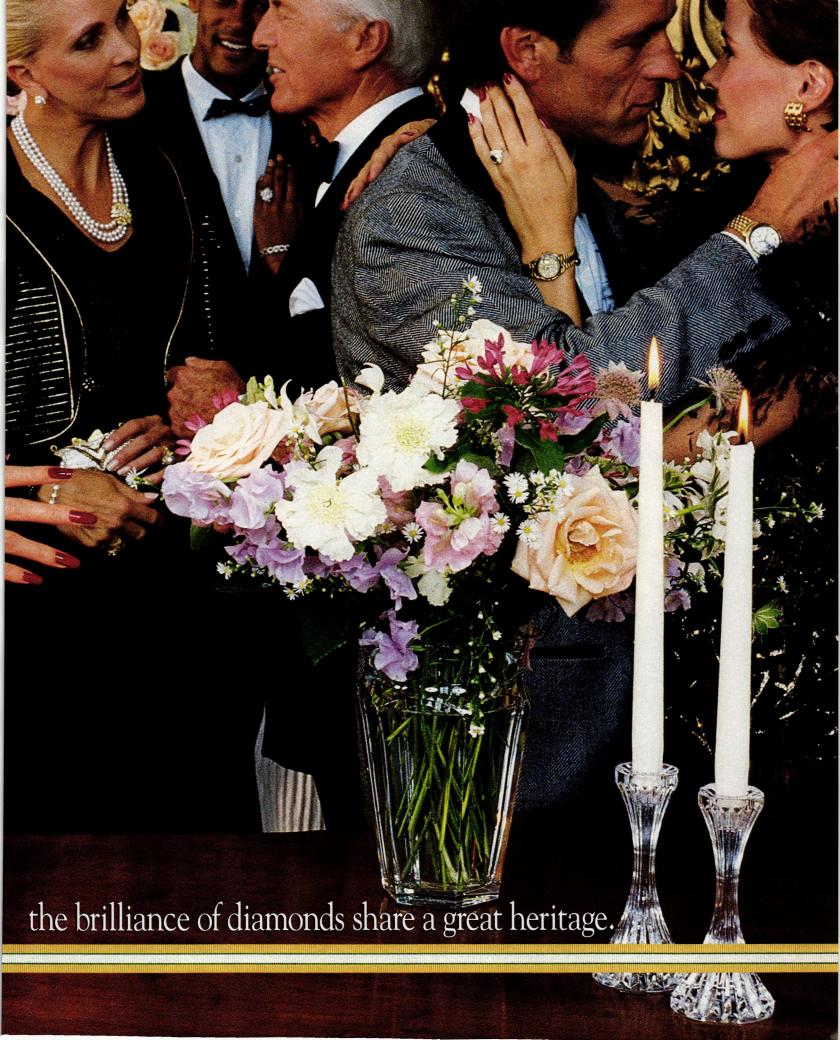


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# **Bough Wows**

Hunting for Christmas ornaments is a year-round obsession By Linda Rosenkrantz

t takes most of us two or three hours to trim our Christmas trees, and it's usually a convivial eggnog-laced exercise. It takes Walter Pogliani two solid days to trim his, and it's a very serious solo business. First he goes up to the attic of his childhood home on Long Island and brings down the worn alligator and textured tin valises his parents brought over when they emigrated from Italy in 1956. Then after carefully removing and unwrapping hundreds of

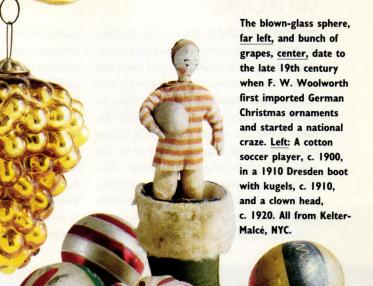
ed to the family cache over the past fifteen years, he spends one full day stringing lights, delicately balancing their voltages, and another arranging fragile ornaments on the tree.

blown-glass ornaments and tree lights, most of which he's add-

Walter Pogliani is one of a growing circle of serious antique Christmas ornament collectors who occupy their spare time—yearround—haunting house sales and flea markets and foraging through antiques and thrift shops in the hope of finding a forgotten box of old Santa-shaped lights or a blown-glass bunch of grapes that had been tucked away in someone else's attic for fifty years.

Among themselves, these aficionados talk an arcane tongue of kugels and putzes and belsnickles—terms that originated in Germany, where the concept of the decorated evergreen first took form. A 1605 travel account tells of the Strassburg custom of adorning fir trees with paper roses, shiny apples, and cookies. Some credit Martin Luther with adding lighted candles, supposedly inspired by the sight of trees against a starry night. The Pennsylvania Germans brought the custom to America and F. W. Woolworth commercialized it in 1880 when he reluctantly invested in \$25 worth of German handblown ornaments, which sold out in two days. Within ten years his annual order was over 200,000 pieces.

Most of these ornaments came from the small German town of Lauscha, which had a long glassblowing tradition. In the mid nine-



teenth century some of its toy and jewelry makers began to blow large hollow bubbles, called kugels, for their own amusement, later developing the technique of swirling a solution of silver nitrate around the inside to produce a chromelike finish. The kugels became so popular all over Europe and America that soon the whole village of Lauscha was working frantically throughout the year to keep up with the demand—a cottage industry in which families operating out of their own houses formed mini production lines. First Papa would fashion the ornament in wood or clay, from

Collector Walter Pogliani, above right, and a sampling of his vintage tree trimmings, below. German glass garland, c. 1930, right, and German kugels, c. 1920, left, from Kelter-Malcé, NYC.



#### COLLECTING

which he would make a plaster of paris mold. He would then blow the glass and after the resulting transparent globe or figural shape had cooled, Mama or one of the children would coat the inside with the silver nitrate solution and dip the outer surfaces into a color dye bath. When the object was dry, it would receive a lacquer coating, followed by the addition of glitter or a painted design. This procedure continued in Germany, Poland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia until the 1930s when World War II interrupted the flow.

Though the most familiar, kugels are by no

means the only kind of Christmas decoration collected today. Wire-wrapped ornaments—unsilvered balls elaborately enmeshed in crinkly wire—and Dresdens, embossed cardboard figures named for their place of origin, have equally ardent followings. Also popular are the collagelike chromolithographed paper ornaments (known variously as scraps, die-cuts, and chromos) and cotton-batting figures that came into vogue in the early 1900s. Other collectors focus on ornaments of tin or chenille, wax or bisque angels, glass garlands, early German Father Christmas

figures called belsnickles, and Nativity groups known as putzes.

The category of ornament favored by Walter Pogliani is the figural glass type—out of those battered suitcases every Christmas come wonderfully patinated acorns, snakes, trumpets, and birds with spun-glass tails. His real passion, however, is Christmas lights. Pogliani, a designer at Izod Lacoste who frequently turns to ornaments for color inspiration, has a clear memory of the particular light that sparked his enthusiasm. "I was about two years old," he recalls. "My father was putting up the tree, and I remember being enthralled by a glowing emerald bubble-shaped bulb. That did it."

Pogliani's years of hunting have produced some rare Austrian figural lights dating from



A late 19th century gold-embossed

Dresden star with a cotton and crepe figure,
c. 1890, from Kelter-Malcé, NYC.

1915 to 1920—many of them made from the same molds as the glass ornaments—in fish forms, roses, angels, parrots and canaries, and baskets of poinsettias. There's even a devil and a seaworthy Santa encircled by a lifesaver. And yes, he does still have the original green light that started it all.

Interest in Christmas ornaments has ballooned like a giant kugel in the last few years, and the same ornaments that could once be picked up for a quarter or so now dangle three-figure price tags. But for passionate Santa seekers it's well worth it. After all, unlike the rest of us, they get to have their Christmas all year long.

(For a list of sources for Christmas tree ornaments see Resources.)



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## ENTERTAINING

# Tea & Cinema

A legendary Hollywood hostess lifts her cup to life's simple pleasures By Pilar Viladas

or a good conversation, there's nothing better than a tea table," says Jean Howard. The author of the recently published Jean Howard's Hollywood: A Photo Memoir and a legendary Hollywood hostess, Howard knows a thing or two about entertaining, and she finds teatime the best time to entertain. "Tea is the most civilized way to talk to people," she explains. "You don't have to worry about who sits where or whether you have the right num-

ber of men and women." "Moreover," she maintains, "if two people who disagree would just sit down with a nice cup of tea instead of a martini, they could work out their differences without saying a lot of things they'd regret later."

Howard, who, as the wife of the late pioneering Hollywood agent Charles Feldman, entertained enough celebrities to know that "loading a room with them is deadly," likes to surround herself with a mixture of movie people, writers, and bright young things-all of whom are expected to have a sense of humor. Tea is served at an inlaid marble table in the living room of the rambling Beverly Hills house she shares with her second husband, jazz musician Tony Santoro. The living room, with its deep green plaster walls, comfortable banquettes and armchairs, and photographs of friends such as Cole Porter and Frances Goldwyn, was originally decorated in the 1940s by William Haines, the silent-film star turned superstar Hollywood decorator, and was recently updated by another dear friend, Robert Denning of Denning & Fourcade.

Elegant informality is the hallmark of a Howard tea: roomy chairs and a high table so that guests don't have to balance their teacups on their knees. "The men must be comfortable," she warns, "or they'll drag their wives off early." The menu, too, features "comfort food": sandwiches of tomato, chopped chicken, or egg salad ("no watercress"). She fondly recalls the little onion sandwiches Countess Bismarck, her neighbor on Capri, used to serve, "which were the best tea sandwiches I ever ate and which I was never able to duplicate." Desserts are equally plain, with pound cake a favorite because "people don't think it's fattening."

Such unpretentious hospitality comes easily to the woman whose relaxed yet perceptive insider photographs of movie stars and socialites were featured in the pages of *Life* and *Vogue*. Long ago Howard realized that it was the fanciest people with the grandest houses and the best kitchens who were often the happiest with life's simple pleasures. "You'd be surprised how these people like a good hamburger." The *Thirtysomething* generation may have rediscovered the joys of meat loaf, but for Howard it never went out of style; her Finnish cook's recipe was famous. And Howard takes credit for having been the first hostess in Hollywood to serve Mexican food at a dinner party—"nothing fancy, just cheap Mexican food. Billy Wilder loved it."

No less a man of the world than Noël Coward once handed her a copy of Mildred O. Knopf's *The Perfect Hostess Cookbook* and

said, "If you can read, you can cook." She could and did and still does, often serving a table of six or eight a simple baked chicken dish with rice, a big salad, a basket of "really good breads" for dinner, and a freshfruit dessert in her antique-filled dining room. Howard is also known for her New Year's Day lunches, which often consist of such hearty fare as German sausages and potato salad.

Still, tea remains her favorite social occasion. When Howard goes out for tea, she favors hotels such as the Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas or L.A.'s newly renovated Regent Beverly Wilshire-which, incidentally, is where the dashing Charles Feldman first laid eyes on Howard, then a young actress, at a tea dance. But nothing beats tea at home, especially on a winter day in front of a roaring fire. And although she prefers tea to cocktails, she nonetheless considers it a compliment when after a leisurely tea the clock strikes six and a guest says, "I think I'll have a drink before I leave." Jean Howard, ever the gracious hostess, will invariably reply, "I think I'll have one with you." A



Jean Howard shares a lighthearted moment at her tea table with producer William Frye. The Meissen porcelain in the background was a gift from Cole Porter, a longtime friend.



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## TASTE

# The Name of the Room

Once you've decorated the space, what do you call it?

By Ellen Hopkins



t is not enough to ticket [the room] with some such general designation as 'library,' 'drawing room,' or 'den.'...The unsatisfactory relations of some people with their rooms are often to be explained in this way.

—Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman

The Decoration of Houses

ADAM HAD it easy. Eve was too busy pursuing higher education to notice how badly he botched the naming of the beasts. So Adam never learned just how vulgar mule sounds. Nor was he taken to task for revealing his nouveau origins with such la-di-da names as ocelot and gazelle. It never occurred to him that calling a male chicken a chanticleer precluded all future putting up of feet and having a beer.

The name game is dicier these days. Critics abound. And it's not just figuring out what to call your children and your pets that makes for anxiety. Naming rooms involves the greatest exposure of all.

On the face of things it seems so easy, especially for those with smallish houses. Kitchen, Bathroom, Living Room, Bedroom. What could be simpler? But suppose there's more than one room in which people sit after dinner. Ask yourself: I How many books must you have before Library ceases to sound silly? 2 How good must the chintz be for the Drawing Room? Or is chintz not right either—is anything short of gilt or ormolu a no-no in such a room? 3 Do Morning Rooms necessarily face east? 4 And is that space before the Living Room the Foyer, Vestibule, or just Hall? Does size or shape determine which is which? How long must that space be before you can call it the Gallery? 5 And can the Veranda travel above the Mason-Dixon line? (Answers to the above are at the end.)

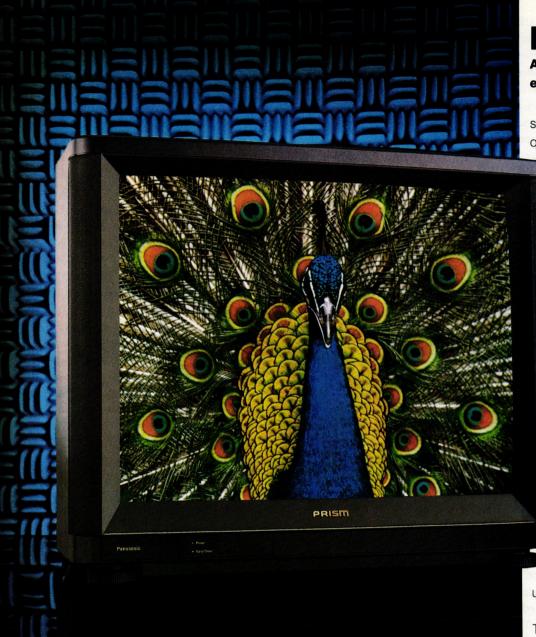
It's the seventeenth-century Dutch who are to blame for all this nonsense. Room-naming angst was virtually unknown in medieval Europe for the simple reason that the notion of different function equals different room is relatively new. The word "furniture" meant equipment—anything that could be carted about, room to room, including tables, beds, and chamber pots. There wasn't one room to dine in and one in which to sleep; people did what they pleased wherever the spirit—and the weather—moved them. Room distinctions seldom made it beyond the Goldilocks vernacular: big, small, hot, cold. In Italy, palazzo owners seldom took the time to count how many rooms they had, much less name them.

It was the Dutch, with their overwhelming affection for their abodes, who romanticized shelter. They made models of their houses, they even commissioned portraits of them. By the late nineteenth century Henry James was already griping that Americans weren't strict enough with room differentiation: People were actually sewing in the study or writing in parlors clearly meant for conversation only. Naming tyranny was just around the corner.

Once the obvious rooms are dispensed with, few homesteaders are all that logical when it comes to christening the place where the family plays Scrabble after supper. This isn't about convenience. Instead, naming the rooms becomes an occasion to brandish humor, make a social statement, or frighten the guests.

Names for rooms come and go. Jokey ones tend to have the shortest lives: exercise facilities known as the Torture Room. Cubbyholes called the Sulking Room or Canine Château. Few Conversation Pits survived the seventies—unless you count the ones in ersatz Barbie-doll houses.

Stodgy names, however, are coming back. The fifth floor of Bloomingdale's, for instance, was littered with Bed–Sitting Rooms this year, courtesy of Ralph Lauren's Anglo fantasies. Not everyone is enchanted. One Lauren detractor finds the term "vaguely tubercular. If people can't understand that small sofas *are* allowed in bedrooms"—here the critic shrugs. Keeping Rooms are starting to crop up in ads for Colonial-style houses, although no one seems entirely sure what one keeps in them. "This is where people kept their aging parents," one Litchfield County real estate agent announced brightly to a prospective buyer last month. And Living Rooms, after years of being maligned by interior decorators as tacky and oh so middle class, are enjoying a renaissance as well.



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In certain houses in the fifties and sixties, a Library was considered pretentious. Old Mr. Frick had a Library; ordinary mortals had Rec Rooms or Dens. But today a dark room—preferably lacquered green or red—and three hardcovers a Library makes. Whether these books are ever read is beside the point.

In one ancestral place undergoing a makeover, the decorator claims that the young heir and his mum actually have two different naming systems for the rooms. "For instance," he says, "there's a wood-paneled room that, once renovation is complete, will naturally be called the Library by the son. To his mother, though, it will always be the Den."

More awkward situations arise when the architect, decorator, and client can't agree upon a name. Jeffrey Bilhuber and Thomas Scheerer are currently engaged in a power struggle with

an architect who wants to call their client's living room the Great Room. "It still hasn't been resolved," says Bilhuber. "Of course, it could be a whole lot worse. Imagine the Really Great Room." When another homeowner insisted on calling her large living room the Salon, workmen retaliated by referring to it among themselves as the Saloon.

"You're put in the position of constantly correcting the clients," a decorator sighs, "or forcing yourself to say Butler's Pantry without going off into gales of laughter."

Often it's the littlest rooms that end up with the fanciest names. Architect Frederick Fisher, who seldom bothers with room distinctions at all, once did a separate entryway lined in lead which is called—what else?—the Anechoic Chamber. And yes, the owners really call it that. "The Anechoic Chamber was a necessary transition between the profane street and the sacred space of the home," says the architect.

The M Group's Carey Maloney and Hermes Mallea designed a shed for a penthouse which they called the Pavilion. "I love the idea of saying, 'Oh, just shove that hose in the Pavilion, won't you?" Maloney says. And architect Frederic Schwartz did a Great Hall that was only five feet wide—but 22 feet high. Somehow in this irony-laden age, this appellation feels OK. "It's fine to call a space the size of a cricket field the Great Hall," Hermes Mallea contends, "but it sounds like you plan to dole out largesse to the serfs on an annual basis."

But when faced with forty rooms awaiting name tags, most people aren't courageous enough for major indulgences of grandness or whimsy. Especially if Alice Mason sold them the place. "I wouldn't call a room the Hercules Room and I wouldn't let anyone else here do that either," she says firmly. "Decorators might do silly pretentious things like that. As a top real estate broker, I don't."

Few have the guts required to name a room the Cloister/Bomb Shelter—as one admittedly confused Connecticut woman did in the sixties. A Gallery of Tears may sound temptingly Gothic, but color designations are what most end up with instead. The room that Uncle Teddy uses for unspeakable rites with his mistress becomes the plain old Red Room.

Dullness isn't all that's wrong with this convention. What happens if you repaint? Room names aren't meant to be done over every

few years. More troubling is the fact that some of the best colors have the ugliest names. "Cocktails in the Puce Room" just doesn't fly. And what about women who've spent their married lives lying to husbands about decorative schemes? Imagine the fate of non-primary pigmentation if women were forced to abandon "Oh, darling, I don't know what you call it, it's just a yellowish, neutral, beigy sort of—oh, never mind. You'll never even notice what color it is" for this bold caps announcement on architectural renderings—THE PEACH ROOM.

As for directional tags, they may sound sweet in novels, but unless one lives in Kansas with an unimpeded view of the sky, the East Bedroom doesn't give guests any idea where they should go. Far better to name a room after whatever adorns its walls or shelves. A certain quality of art or bric-a-brac is required, though.

Old Mr. Frick had

a Library; ordinary

mortals had Rec

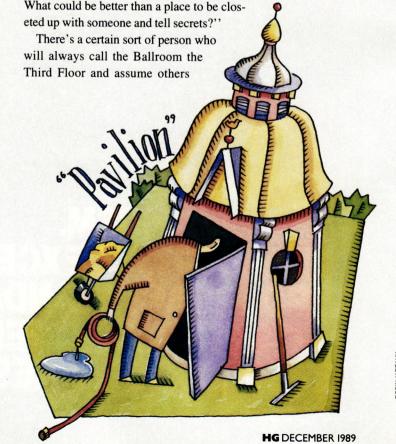
Rooms or Dens

The rules aren't writ in stone, but most decorators agree that although the Biedermeier Room is OK, the Conran's Room is not. Nor is the Leroy Neiman Room.

And if you're dealing with a prominent architect or designer, you'd better know your p's and q's when it comes to the style or contents of a room. A woman announced to an architect that one of her renovation goals was to

have a French Provincial Room. The architect put a stop to that. "There are seventeen provinces in France," he said icily. "Call me when you figure out which one you want."

When Carey Maloney and Hermes Mallea were commissioned to design a Boudoir for a woman client, they christened it the Closet instead. "We both loathe Boudoir—a nasty, fancy D&D lady's term—and this was a fun way to downplay it," explains Mallea. "Plus we love the idea of closets in general.





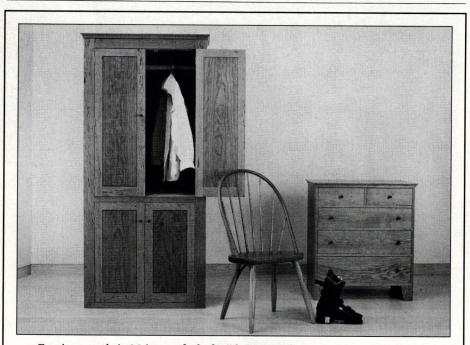
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#### TASTE

know what they're talking about. These people also feel compelled to call anything over 5,000 square feet the Cottage. Or if they live in Tribeca, their loft becomes a Garret.

Downplaying has other, more practical aims. When decorator Keith Irvine decided to add a Ballroom to what his writer wife, Chippy, describes as their "rather bleak farmhouse," he called it the Family Room so the planning board would approve. "Which is nonsense," says Chippy, "because Keith

In medieval
Europe room
distinctions seldom
made it beyond
the Goldilocks
vernacular: big,
small, hot, cold

will sit in it all by himself. This room has nothing remotely to do with family. I do hate this Ballroom. I hate it so much. It'll be the size of a church when he's through." She adds with a laugh, "Quite honestly, I think Keith has ideas above his station. Ballroom indeed. Keith doesn't even dance!"



ANSWERS: I The Library should be darker than the other sitting rooms. That's all. Books are virtually irrelevant, especially if there's a stand of pipes and some antique maps on the wall. 2 The Drawing Room is also about relativity—it should always be bigger and fancier than the Living Room. Keep in mind Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman's "vague feeling that no drawing room is worthy of the name unless it is uninhabitable." 3 Morning Rooms needn't face east. But the name does have another form of tyranny: you must sit in it after breakfast, as the second Mrs. De Winter discovered after the servants laughed at her. 4 According to Alice Mason, "The Vestibule leads to the Foyer, which, if it's huge, is called a Gallery. That's all." 5 And though Veranda doesn't travel north, Florida Room doesn't go south. It seems an even trade.



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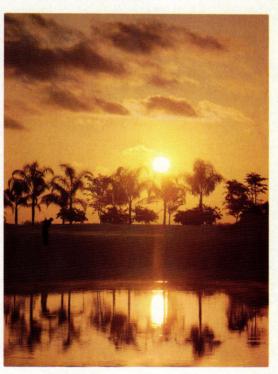
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# **ANTIQUES**



Peasant figures and flowers are among the penwork motifs on the 1825 table, above left, from Hyde Park Antiques, NYC. Above right: A game table, c. 1810, with a penwork tilt-top from Kentshire Galleries, NYC. Details see Resources.

# Perfect Penmanship

The little-known art of penwork is rediscovered on English Regency furniture By Glenn Harrell

he urge to ornament that burgeoned during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spawned an endless array of oddball crafts. Working out of their own parlors, well-bred ladies transformed chenille and feathers into fanciful landscapes, crocheted yard after yard of sumptuous fringe, and worked shells and beads into giant concretions that formed picture frames and jewelry boxes. One of the most remarkable of these polite pastimes was the practice of meticulously scribbling ink designs onto chessboards, fire screens, and any other object ripe for embellishment. Perfected by both amateur artisans and professionals, penwork was used to imitate the rich surfaces of Anglo-Indian ebony and ivory furniture.

The technique involved japanning the object black, applying the pattern in white gesso, and then filling in the details with a fine quill pen dipped in India ink. This procedure varied depending on what was to be imitated. Neoclassical ocher figures, for example, could be simulated by drawing directly on stained wood, while bold silhouettes were best achieved against a white ground. The final step was a coat of varnish, which over the years has given many pieces an amber cast. Popular patterns were published in ladies' magazines of the day, but the most inspired motifs were penned off the cuff and reflect the whims of the artist. A box with pure Renaissance ornament on its top might open to reveal a Gothick ruin or an Arabian fantasy contained within a Hindoo border. Sometimes the decoration was clearly for private amusement. One handscreen is embellished on the inner side with a droll character playing his violin-shaped head.

Too time-consuming to survive the industrial revolution, penwork declined after 1840. The pieces that have survived, however, are currently enjoying a new vogue. New York's Hyde Park Antiques has cornered the market with a collection of close to a hundred examples unveiled in a recent show. Although rare penworked case pieces can top \$200,000, prices are comparatively reasonable—the going rate for tea caddies is \$2,500 to \$6,500 and game tables are \$10,000 to \$20,000. Not surprisingly, decorated seating furniture is virtually nonexistent. As Hyde Park's owner, Bernard Karr, remarks, "I can't imagine someone penworking the splat of a chair to then sit down and rub off six months of effort."



Elaborate Neoclassical penwork scenes from *The Iliad*, after Flaxman, ornament the interior and sides of a double cabinet, c. 1815, above, from Hyde Park Antiques. Below: A document box, c. 1810, embellished with an archery scene rests on a game table, also c. 1810. Both from Kentshire Galleries.



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# Hidden Treasures

New York's off-the-avenue dealers flourish behind closed doors By Dana Cowin

hopping in New York City can be intimidating. Antiques shops seem to attract people who've gone to finishing school at Sotheby's and couldn't care less about prices—after all, no item is too expensive if you love, love, love it. The atmosphere at by-appointment-only businesses, on the other hand, is completely different. Owners who have set up shop in their parlors are dedicated to personal service, offering a cup of tea and a chat before getting to work. And because it takes a little bit of effort to make an appointment—only one of these places keeps regular hours—they reward clients with good prices. The area code for all numbers is 212.

#### JUDY CORMIER

For the price of a cab to the Upper East Side, you can enjoy the experience of shopping abroad. Better still, the prices are London prices. As the U.S. representative for the well-respected British dealer Lucy Campbell, Judy Cormier has a wide selection of prints snapped up from auction houses and private dealers, including plates from Basilius Besler's seventeenth-century *Hortus Eystettentis*, Piranesi's architectural prints, anonymous nineteenth-century depictions of Russian Empire costumes, as well as renderings of interiors by contemporary artists who will also take on commissions. Inventive mats and frames created in London—faux tortoiseshell, wood painted black with abstract gold-leaf designs, hand-dipped

Italian papers for the mat—are sometimes worth the price of the print. (517-3993)

#### **TERRY L. MORTON**

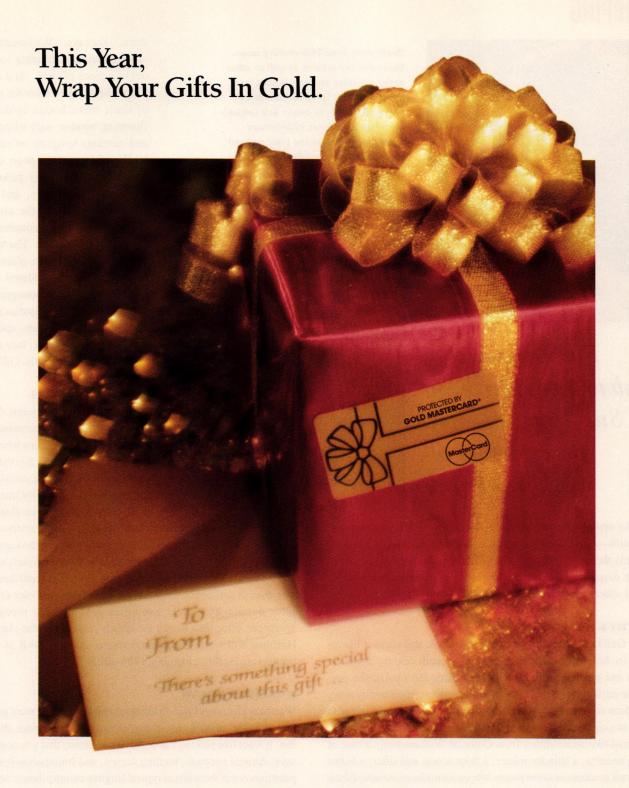
The floor of Morton's shop is almost completely hidden by piles of pillows, which are inviting, enticing you to dive in. But once you know what the pillows are, the impulse is squelched. Each one is a work of art, fragile and worthy of respect. Morton buys tapestries, textiles, rugs, and needlepoint





On tables in Judy Cormier's dining room, far left, stacks of 18th- and 19th-century engravings. Left: An engraving by Savorelli & Camporesi, after Raphael. Top: An English painted table at Karen Warshaw's is organized for writing letters. Above: A Regency mirror hangs above a coromandel Anglo-Indian box inlaid with silver and ivory.

JON JENSEN



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For the price of a cab to the Upper East Side, you can enjoy the experience of shopping abroad

Needlepoint from 19th-century chairbacks and fire screens as well as other antique textiles are transformed into pillows, left, by Terry Morton. Below: Pantry & Hearth, in owner Gail Lettick's town house, features 19th-century wood pieces such as the table and red sugar bucket with original paint.



them," she says. "We loved the sense of a human hand creating something out of a piece of cloth. And they just happened to sell." Now the top floor of their town house looks like a charming boudoir with white dresses and curtains hanging on racks and stacks of large European squares, nightdress cases, baby pillowcases, tea towels, bedcovers, and sheets. predominantly from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, lining the beds and dresser. The most remarkable linens in the place are the magnificently embroidered château sheets that sport fat monograms with raised stitching. Accessories are scattered about: lace bonnets and collars framed by Bert Clarke, lace pillows, and a few paisley shawls. (737-6015)

#### **VICTORIA'S QUILTS**

Like a docent in a museum, Victoria Hoffman effortlessly recounts the history of each of her pieces when a customer views her quilts. It is the history that keeps this onetime social worker in the business. For Hoffman's clients, patterns that seem abstract are

assigned a past and a meaning, and much-deserved attention is directed at women who funneled their creative energy through the eye of a needle. Although the quilts range from somber Amish to wacky 1950s, most of Hoffman's stock is more decorative and less expensive than that of better-known New York dealers. Color often dictates popularity: pastel examples pass quickly through the apartment since they match the clients' palettes in the Hamptons. Hoffman will wash, repair, and restore quilts as well as sew on channels to facilitate hanging. (794-1922)

#### KAREN WARSHAW

Warshaw promotes English antiques and service. "I want people to feel at home, drink a cup of tea, relax. The experience should be fun. It's not like picking out socks or something that you need," she says. Animal portraits, hunting scenes, and Impressionist-inspired paintings cover the walls in typical English country-house style. For the most part, these are not paintings with daunting pedigrees but a breed of solid signed pieces that were exhibited around England during Queen Victoria's reign. English objects such as silver candlesticks, burled wood boxes, and an intricately carved coromandel Anglo-Indian box infuse the room with amiable charm. The furniture is a combination of authentic pieces and reproductions commissioned by Warshaw. The owner is a savvy dealer with one eye on the merchandise and the other on marketing it—she's already started up a bridal registry. (167 East 74th St.; 439-7870. Mon.-Fri. 11 A.M.-3 P.M.) ▲ Editor: Alexandra de Rochefort

from the seventeenth to the twentieth century with prominent central motifs—a dog, a blooming rose, a scene from Aesop's Fables—and turns them into pillows. The subtlety and clarity of the colors and the exquisite detailing of the pieces is complemented by his tasteful selection of passementerie. (472-1446)

#### **PANTRY & HEARTH**

Dealer Gail Lettick savors the textures, shapes, and signs of life inherent in American eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic objects and painted furniture. Cutting boards are a particular passion, the surface on one side scored by knives yet smoothed by time, the surface on the other painted and peeling, the handle cut out with a heart or a circle. Tinware is another keen interest. When listed, her items read like an inventory from Colonial Williamsburg: a case of larding needles, a laundry mister, a flour scoop and sifter, a batter jug, a vast assortment of tin pieces whose forms have outlasted their usefulness. Lettick often thinks about the people behind the objects. The lid of one small blue box is inscribed in pencil, "To Fannie, Thurs. eve. 1867." "It's just wonderful to think of someone sitting at the hearth," says Lettick, "deciding they want to remember the evening." (532-0535)

#### TROUVAILLE FRANÇAISE

Rough-textured nineteenth-century smocks for men and women picked up as souvenirs in France proved to be the impetus for Muriel and Bert Clarke's business. "We bought things because we loved



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# TRAVEL

# **Kyoto Comforts**

Timeless calm and refined luxury live on in Japan's incomparable traditional inns By Martin Filler

apan can be a shock for Americans who imagine it to be like a stage set from *Madama Butterfly* come to life. The interior designer Joe D'Urso has aptly termed Tokyo "the New York of another planet," and indeed most of urban Japan has that disorienting feeling. Only when you get to Kyoto, the country's ancient imperial capital, do you begin to find the Japan of your dreams. But as a city of over a million people, Kyoto is hardly an Asian version of Colonial Williamsburg. First impressions—traffic, neon lights, shopping arcades, pachinko parlors—can be disappointing. You must get beyond the walls of the city's renowned temples, shrines, imperial villas, gardens, and inns before classical Japan at last comes alive.

The most authentic way for a visitor to experience Kyoto is by living in a ryokan, or traditional inn, where the refined, luxurious, but ultimately simple way of life epitomizes the spirit of the city regarded as the cultural heart of Japan. Being a guest in a ryokan isn't easy. It requires a willingness to accept a high degree of formality, a low degree of privacy because of omnipresent staff, and arcane customs observed with the faultless manners Kyoto is famed for throughout Japan. The ryokan is definitely not for the harried business traveler or those who prefer to flop into bed in their underwear and watch TV while tugging on a vodka and tonic from the minibar. In order to appreciate the pleasures of a ryokan, the guest must

surrender to a routine that at times can seem slow and complicated. This is a participatory effort. You are the focus, and it is therefore most rewarding if you try things you'll never find back home. But it is also profoundly relaxing and restorative once the rhythms of the world's oldest continuous spa system are understood.

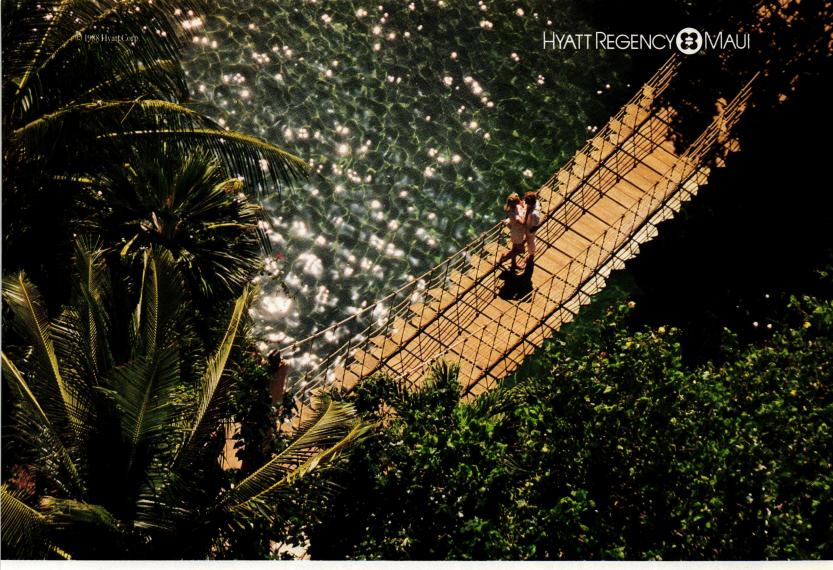
The ryokan day best begins quite early so you can get to Kyoto's architectural and landscape treasures before they are overrun by tourists. You must wake up to make yourself presentable before your jyochu-san, or lady-in-waiting, arrives with the typical Japanese breakfast of soup, fish, rice, salad, seaweed, pickles, and tea. It might take some getting used to, though most inns will provide a Western-style breakfast on request. After a long day of sightseeing, it is blissfully indulgent to return to the ryokan, shed your clothes, don a yukata (cotton robe) and kimono, and be welcomed by your jyochu-san bearing a hot towel, a cup of green tea, and a small sweet. A bath has already been drawn in the wooden soaking tub covered with three broad cedar planks to keep the water hot until you're ready to slip into it. After a half hour immersed up to your neck, there is time to contemplate the calmness of the verdant walled garden behind the shoji, appreciate the beauty of the scroll painting and ikebana, enjoy the grassy fragrance of the tatami underfoot, or be reinvigorated by a shiatsu massage. At a ryokan all the senses are at once heightened and soothed in a way that is almost impossible in a Western hotel, no matter how grand.

Dinner is served early and is taken, as are all meals, alone in one's room. The Japanese genius for food presentation is raised to a high art at a ryokan. The subtle interplays of wood, lacquer, and ceramic serving pieces of varied color, pattern, shape, and texture offer



At the front door of the Tawaraya Ryokan, right, rows of slippers await guests at the first step in their welcome. Far right: At the rear of the 300year-old inn, a leafy walled garden.

a dazzling repertoire of design ideas. The food itself is just as thoughtfully arranged, although some preparations look more interesting than they taste. After dinner, while the guest goes out for a refreshing walk, the room is converted for sleeping. A futon is brought out, a floor lantern placed next to it, and heavy wooden shutters are



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Maui, Hawaii

### TRAVEL

clamped over the shoji from the outside.

There are nineteen inns in Kyoto rated first-class by the Japan Ryokan Association. The two most famous are directly across the street from each other in the central but quiet Nakagyo-ku section of the city. Japan's most celebrated ryokan is the Tawaraya (Rice Bale House). Under the direction of its perfectionist owner, Mrs. Toshi Satow, the threehundred-year-old Tawaraya has attained the reputation of the world's best hotel. After a stay here, one is disinclined to dispute it. The Tawaraya attracts a stellar international clientele, from King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden to Saul Bellow, Barbra Streisand, and Leonard Bernstein. You will be treated with no less distinction.

From the moment you take off your shoes at the stone threshold and put on slippers to enter, every aspect of the ravishing setting has been attended to with consummate taste and breathtaking style. Richly burnished wood surfaces gleam in the dim light of corridors lined with enviable antiques, fine porcelains, and superb works of art. The guest rooms, most of which look out on one of the inn's six large private gardens, are impeccably furnished. There are concessions to modernity like telephones and televisions, but these are discreetly covered with squares of brocade to neutralize their impact on the serene interior landscape. Each visitor is supplied with a wardrobe of yukatas and kimonos. Mine included one of the most sensuous garments I have ever worn: a black raw-silk kimono with such a thick, soft, nubby texture that it felt like well-washed terry. When I asked if this miraculous robe could be purchased, as the conventional ones in hotels around the world can, I was politely told, "Oh no, it is a very special old kimono and not for sale."

The biggest problem is getting a reservation, especially on weekends. Waits of six months are commonplace, and for the peak Kyoto tourist seasons—cherry blossom time in April, the Gion Festival in July, the fall foliage season in November—a year's advance booking is necessary. But persistence is well rewarded. This is not just a great hostelry but a rich aesthetic event that will remain with you for a lifetime. (Tawaraya, Fuyacho Aneyakoji-agaru, Nakagyo-ku, 604 Kyoto; 211-5566, Telex 5423-273, Fax 211-2204. 16 rooms with bath, 3 without. *Rates:* \$215—\$570 for double room)

Long considered the second-best is the Hiiragiya (Holly House), the place you stayed in if you couldn't get a booking at its more acclaimed neighbor, the Tawaraya. A recent visit proved this conventional wisdom to be true. Although the handsome exterior and entry court of the Hiiragiya seem as promising as those at the Tawaraya, the tacky reception area and drab public rooms announce a much less elevating experience than its sublime neighbor. Here the front desk is emblazoned with garish credit-card stickers, the overhead lighting is fluorescent, there are showcases of touristy souvenirs for sale, and the sitting room is a sad amalgam of the worst fifties Japanese and Western design.

The staff cannot be depended on to understand English. Repeated requests to have my clothes ironed-accompanied with miming—were finally answered with "Ah, you want to call Ireland!" I then asked for someone who could speak English and thereby brought forth the wrath of the Hiiragiya's manic manager, Kakuko Ushiroku. "I am not 'the one who speaks English,' " she reprimanded. "I have a name. Why do you not address me by my name? After all, I know your name, Mr. Martin Filter!" Although it would be unthinkable for the concierge of any European luxury hotel to upbraid a guest in such an imperious manner, in courtesy obsessed Japan this sudden outburst was even more startling.

The private rooms at the Hiiragiya are more pleasant than its public spaces, but again they don't come close to the Tawaraya's glorious decorative style. Anomalies like a ship's wheel clock can ruin the aura of a tatami room, while other touches, like remote-control curtains and a heated padded toilet seat, are merely silly. The food is excellent. On the first night guests are given an eleven-course kaiseki dinner and thereafter have a choice of well-prepared specialties such as tempura, shabu-shabu, teriyaki, or sukiyaki. Nonetheless, proximity to an institution so vastly superior, as well as an attitude that even an acquiescent American can find haughty-to-hostile, conjure up a new Zen parable: the sound of no hands clapping. (Hiiragiya, Fuyacho Aneyakoji-agaru, Nakagyo-ku, 604 Kyoto; 221-1136, Telex 5422-045, Fax 221-1139. 28 rooms with bath, 5 without. Rates: \$370-\$1,145 double occupancy, breakfast and dinner included) •

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# **Under Our Trees**

HG editors pick the books they'd most like to unwrap this holiday season

trolling vicariously through Private Gardens of Paris by Madison Cox (Harmony, \$40), I feel a bit like Lambert Strether in Henry James's The Ambassadors—an outsider admitted to a Paris few outsiders ever see. James's characters might have recognized a kindred spirit in Madison Cox, an American garden designer who has lived in France for ten years and lately won acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Even though the chapter heading for each of the thirty gardens is a generic title—"A Formal Box Parterre," "A Garden in Which to Entertain," "A Minimalist Walled Garden"—it is clear that every landscape reflects the taste of the individuals who inhabit it. One need not have a green thumb to savor a glimpse of the plein air domains of Yves Saint Laurent, Andrée Putman, or Baron and Baroness Guy de Rothschild. And there are piquant surprises such as a topiary elephant chez Baroness Lulu de Waldner, a rooftop vegetable patch overlooking the Centre Pompidou, and a Normandy-style courtyard where Cole Porter is said to have kept a Norman cow.

If anything can rouse a housebound gardener like me from winter dormancy, it is the majestic reprint of The Besler Florilegium: Plants of the Four Seasons (Abrams, \$150), a rare hand-colored botanical compendium first published in 1613 by Basilius Besler of Nuremberg. In more than 1,000 engravings, the volume documents every plant in the gardens of Besler's patron, a bishop-prince who collected specimens from Europe and the New World. The formidable range of horticultural lore recorded here—in the images, in Latin inscriptions, and in modern commentary by Gérard G. Aymonin of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris—is matched by the artistry of the renderings. Roots, leaves, stamens, and pistils are depicted as respectfully as the features in a Renaissance court portrait. The massive tome in which Besler's work has been reissued is itself a superb artifact—right down to the slipcase, bowed along its top and bottom edges to follow the curve of the book's spine. I only hope the plates within can be kept from the decorator's cutting garden of prints to snip and frame. **Douglas Brenner** 

Paul Cézanne went back to his hometown, Aix-en-Provence, in 1882 to escape his cruel critics in Paris and for the next 24 years painted undisturbed in the hills. Jacqueline and Maurice Guillaud's Cézanne in Provence (Clarkson Potter, \$60) celebrates this peri-

MFK FISHER Orchids, top, is grounded in facts about dozens of varieties. Above: Sigourney Weaver, among Mapplethorpe's sympathetic photographs of women. Left: Essays by the quintessential food writer M. F. K. Fisher. R

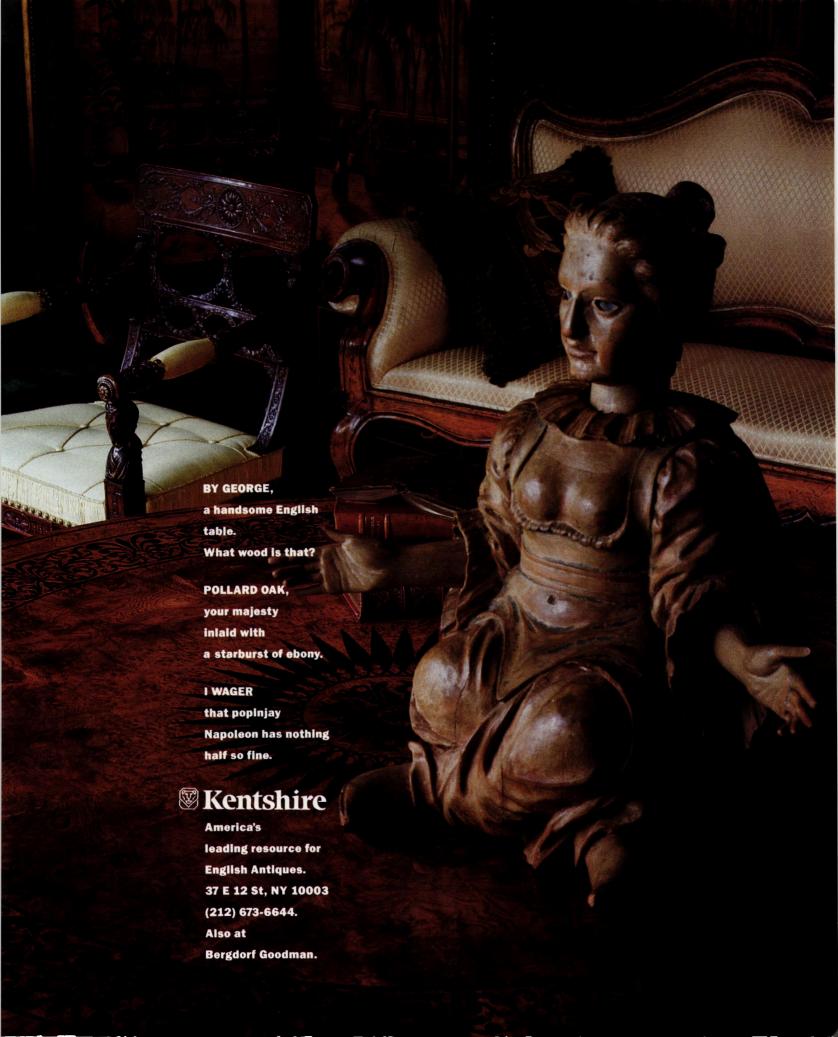
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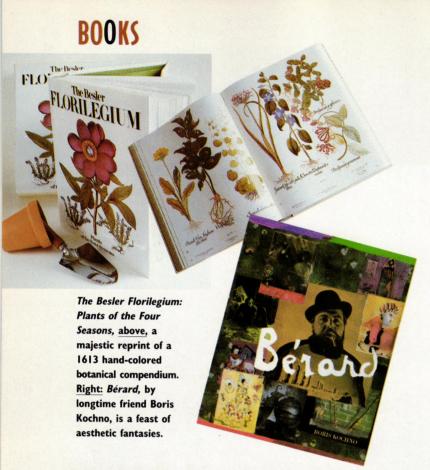
A scenic tour through late Cézanne, above.
Right: A spectacular survey of the Tuscan capital's medieval and Renaissance heritage in *The Art of Florence*.

od of the artist's work with dozens of images virtually uninterrupted by text. The landscape of Mont Sainte-Victoire, energized by Cézanne's fractured perspective, jumps from the page. For me the impact is heightened by the book's layout: the long narrow format reminds me of a horizon, and the brightly colored margins are like generous mats, which delightfully complement the paintings. **Dana Cowin** 

When my friend Robert Mapplethorpe died last March, it seemed like the end of everything, the inevitable culmination of his heroic struggle against AIDS. But the astonishing events since then make it now seem more like the beginning of his posthumous career. The controversy set off by the cancellation of his show at Washington's Corcoran Gallery of Art, followed by a heartening national outcry

FROM TOP: MONICA STEVENSON; COPYRIGHT ® ESTATE OF ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE 1988; NC; MONICA STEVENSON (2)





against censorship of the arts, would have delighted him. There could be no more fitting memorial for this artiste-provocateur.

Mapplethorpe's notoriety is inseparable from his frank, often brutal, homoerotic imagery. But he also liked women tremendously and was a sympathetic photographer of them throughout his career. That less familiar side of this master of life's chiaroscuro contrasts is presented in a handsome new volume, **Some Women** (Bulfinch/Little, Brown, \$50). Like his friend Andy Warhol, Mapplethorpe's bread and butter was a brisk business in portraits, and like Warhol, he devised an immensely flattering formula. Mapplethorpe put his subjects against a black backdrop and then blasted them with light until lines and shadows disappeared. But the results were not merely cosmetic, and an intensified, highly graphic character emerges.

In addition to sexy though tellingly unerotic figure studies, there are luminous head shots of uptown girls (Diandra Douglas, Carolina Herrera), downtown divas (Sandra Bernhard, Cyndi Lauper), and Hollywood stars (Melanie Griffith, Kathleen Turner). A few of Mapplethorpe's best portraits are missing—his sphinxlike Louise Bourgeois and ghostly Doris Saatchi—but they were included in the catalogues of the four retrospectives held in the last year of his life. He sent me one of those books last Christmas, inscribed in a tiny tremulous script. My biggest regret about this collection is that he isn't around to sign it for me this Christmas.

Martin Filler

Anyone interested in social history and ancestral mansions will be mesmerized by **The National Trust Country House Album** (Bulfinch/Little, Brown, \$29.95). Drawing from family scrapbooks, British photographer Christopher Simon Sykes offers an intimate look at the English country houses and the type of *Upstairs*, *Downstairs* life that existed in these places before they were given to

the National Trust. Of particular interest to me were the photographs taken by George Bernard Shaw at Shaw's Corner in Hertfordshire, especially his self-portrait and the snapshots of Mrs. Patrick Campbell, the actress who created the role of Eliza Doolittle. This volume, which documents a time when house and owner reflected each other perfectly, should be in a spot where it can be looked at over and over again, like one's own family album.

My newest favorite in the series of what I call "travel books"—ones that recall great periods of the past—is **Christian Bérard** by his longtime friend Boris Kochno (Panache, \$75). A joyous celebration of French painter and designer Christian Bérard and his circle, the work brings us back to the thirties and forties when Paris was the place for just about everything. There is a feast of illustrations including Bérard's visionary sketches for costumes and theater sets, photographs of friends such as Cocteau and Chanel—who looks more startling and modern than any of the models in the recent issues of *Vogue*—as well as a generous portion of rarely seen paintings. I discovered a portrait of Madame L. by Bérard which I think is one of his most beautiful.

Wendy Goodman

Much of the appeal of books—and magazines, for that matter—about interiors is voyeurism, pure and simple. Because I spend most of the day either behind my own desk or in front of others', my voyeuristic instincts are particularly aroused by desks. From the Desk Of by Hal Drucker and Sid Lerner (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$29.95) is a dream come true for my fellow deskophiles. With 42 photographs by Sing-Si Schwartz, each partnered with a snappy précis, the desks of assorted powers that be, from Helen Gurley Brown to Frank Gehry to Jay Leno, are laid bare to gratifying effect.

Just as gratifying in a more generalized sense is **The Decorator** by Florence de Dampierre (Rizzoli, \$45). It is a who's who of contemporary decorating, with each profile accompanied by an entertaining boxed list of likes, dislikes, favorite colors, least favorite colors, ideal clients, worst clients, and dream projects.

Anyone who cares about food and writing and the intersection thereof either already worships at the shrine of M. F. K. Fisher or needs to—and will be forever indebted for being introduced to the charms of her profoundly pleasurable prose. The ideal starter set for Fisher neophytes is **An Alphabet for Gourmets** (North Point, \$12.95) and **The Gastronomical Me** (North Point, \$12.95).

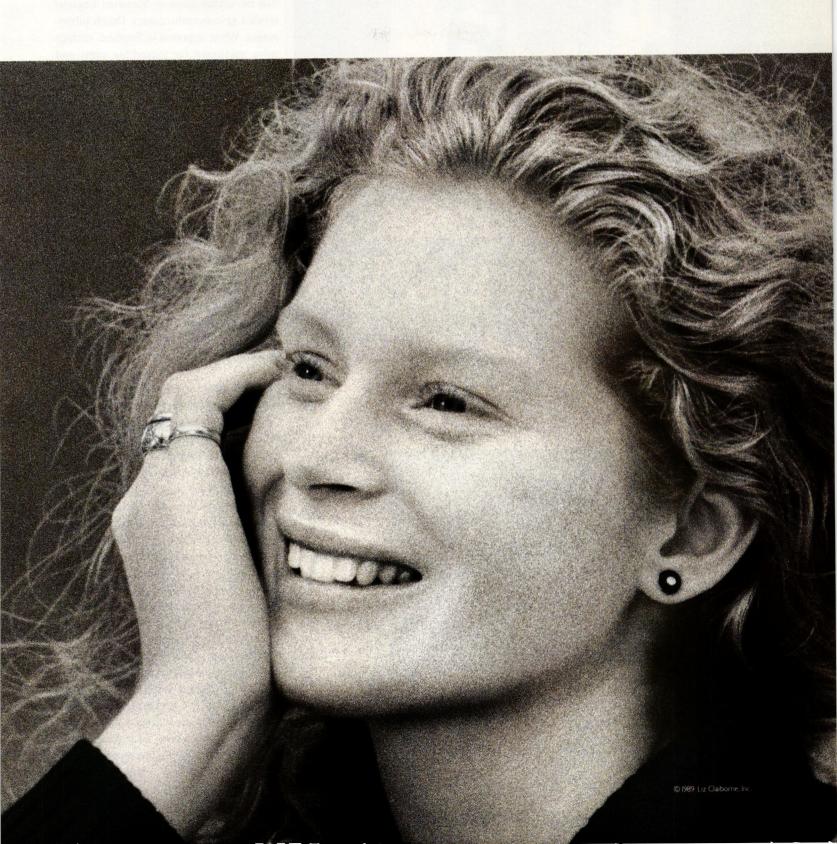
Betty Cornfeld and Owen Edwards's Quintessence—which celebrated "things that offer more to us than we specifically ask of them and to which we respond more strongly than is easily explained"—is a book that has not mere readers but near-cult followers, one reason it has stayed in print since its 1983 publication. Now comes **Elegant Solutions** by Owen Edwards (Crown, \$15.95), which expands and updates the concept. Douglas Whyte's transcendent photographs and John Jay's revelatory design do justice to Edwards's choices of objects mundane (Pears soap) and extraordinary (the Concorde) that meet his criteria: "In mathematics and physics, the term 'elegant solution' indicates a way of solving a problem that is correct and efficient, but beyond that is also pleasing to contemplate." This book is itself an elegant solution to unsolved gift-giving dilemmas.

Liz Logan

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## BOOKS

I love orchids' exotic beauty and long-lasting blooms, and I would be delighted to own Jack Kramer's The World Wildlife Fund Book of Orchids (Abbeville, \$65). Kramer provides salient facts on varieties (35,000 species), specific information on growing orchids at home, as well as intriguing snippets on the plant's history. I learned, for example, that the orchid craze in Victorian England rivaled seventeenth-century Dutch tulipomania. When imported to England, orchids were auctioned for incredible sums and parties were held when they blossomed. After perusing the colorplates and the detailed captions, I can now speak to my florist with authority about more than just phalaenopsis and lady's slippers.

A two-volume survey of the painting, sculpture, and architecture of medieval and Renaissance Florence, The Art of Florence by Glenn Andres, John M. Hunisak, and A. Richard Turner (Abbeville, \$385) was conceived after the 1966 flood damaged or destroyed many of the city's treasured works of art. To record the "extraordinary artistic patrimony," more than 850 photographs were taken over a four-year period. The result is an impressive work with lavish illustrations and a text that is less daunting than it appears. Catie Marron

Charlotte Gere's Nineteenth-Century Decoration: The Art of the Interior

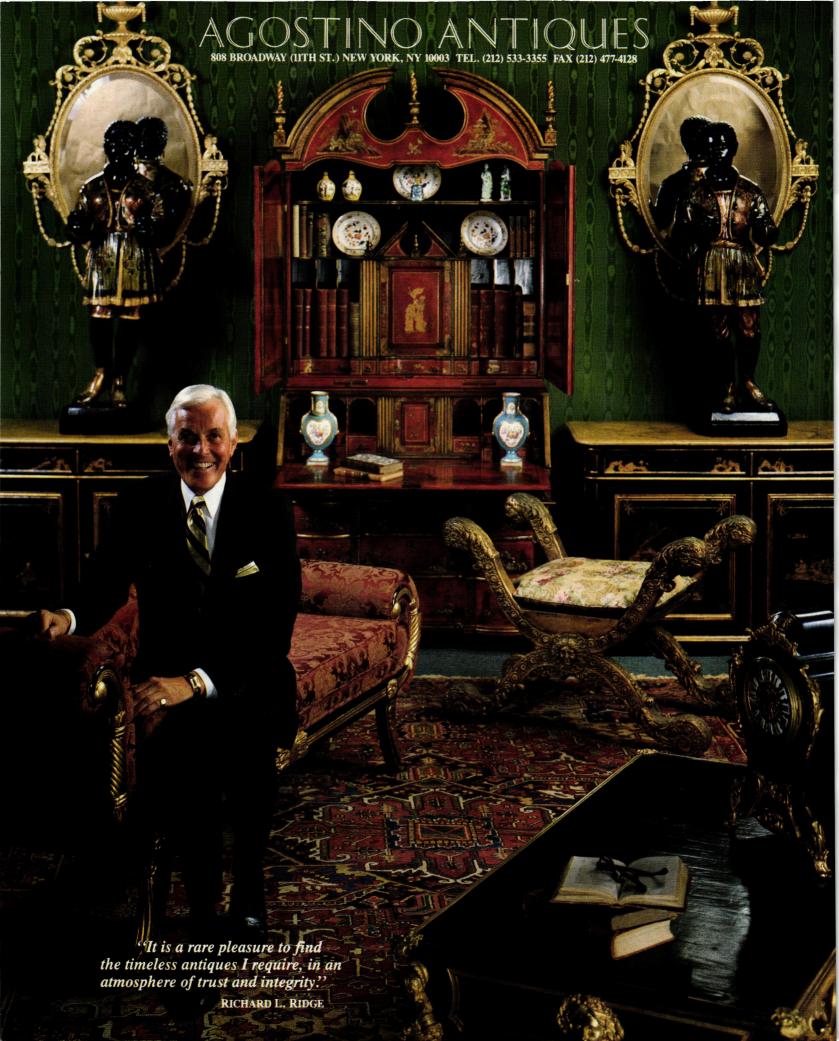
(Abrams. \$95) is the newest addition to the genre of hefty historical decorating books owing much to Mario Praz in their use of period paintings and watercolors to interpret interior design. The nineteenth century is filled with inspiration of the most decorative sort, encompassing as it does the Empire, Biedermeier, Arts and Crafts, and Victorian styles. All the well-known nineteenth-century interiors are here, from Napoleon and Josephine's Malmaison to Sir John Soane's house in London. There are also John and Isabella Stewart Gardner's Boston residence, the Rothschilds' Waddesdon Manor, and a generous sampling of rooms by William Morris. But among the freshest pleasures are Schloss Rosenau in Coburg and the charming bright colors and details of the Biedermeier-period rooms in the Munich Residenz. Easy to dip into a few pages at a time, the book offers up tantalizing information about decorating history and style. **Nancy Novogrod** 



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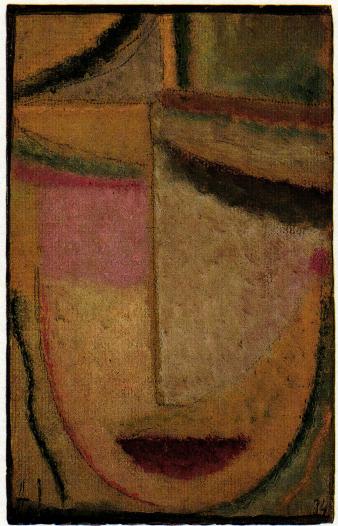
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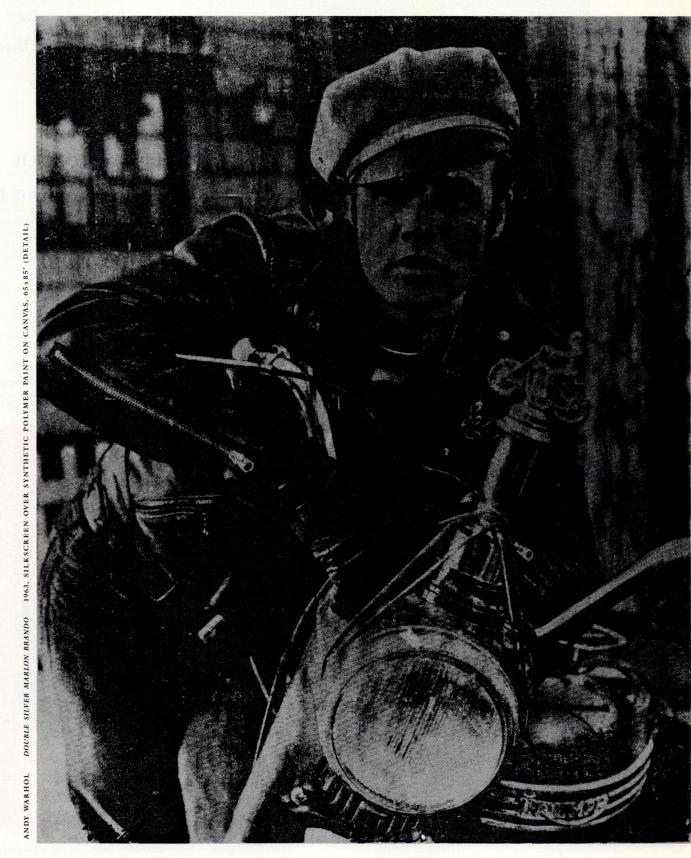
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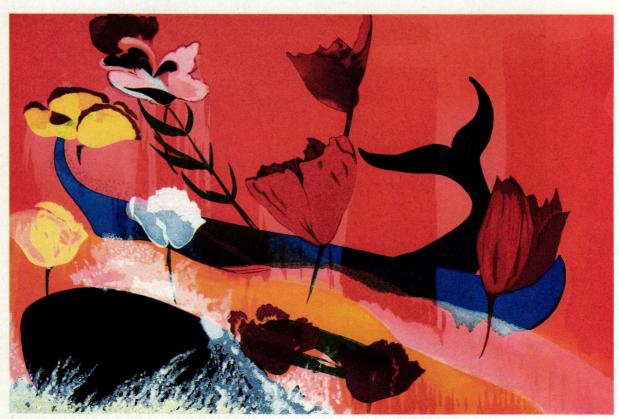
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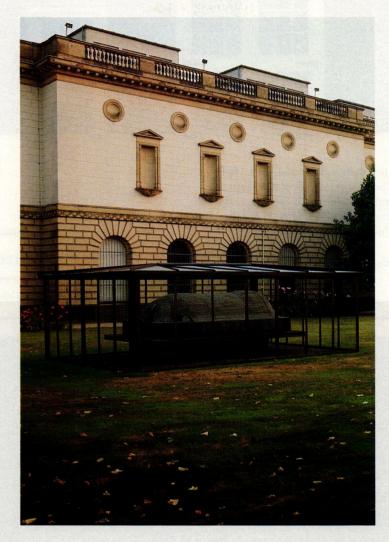
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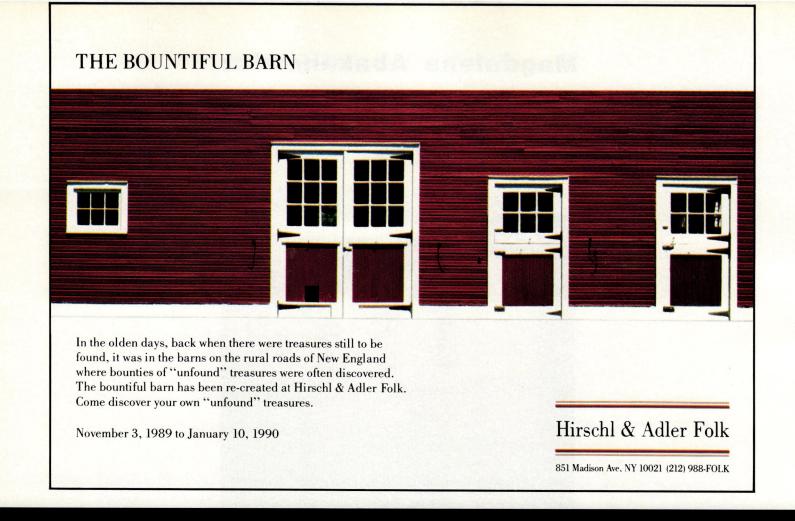


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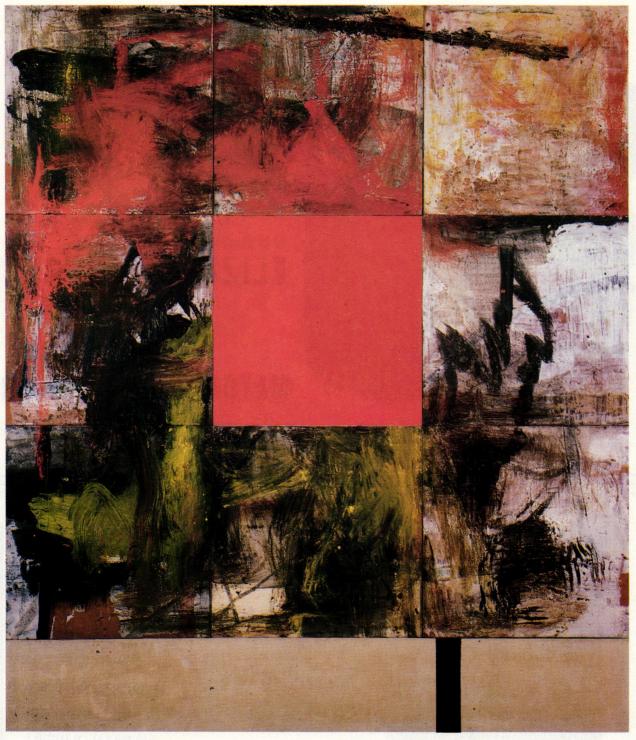
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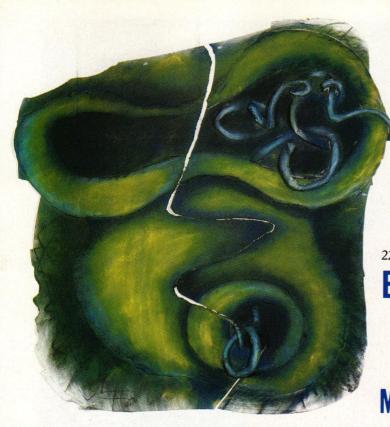
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A pair of corner cupboards designed by Gustav Stickley for his Craftsman Farms, c. 1908. Estimate: \$15,000–20,000 each

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# EDITOR'S PAGE

ow an issue of a magazine evolves

is an interesting question—and, to be sure, an editor in chief's instinct plays a large role. But there are also exigencies of scheduling and season—houses with snow, unless in South America, look most at home in winter; a Caribbean vacation house such as Chessy Rayner's is fine for December, but a Southampton cottage is better for July. The December issue makes its own demands: what with the Christmas holidays and the approach of year's end, you want the issue to be sparkling, the year of HG to dazzle as it fades. Although we did not find the perfect scheme for

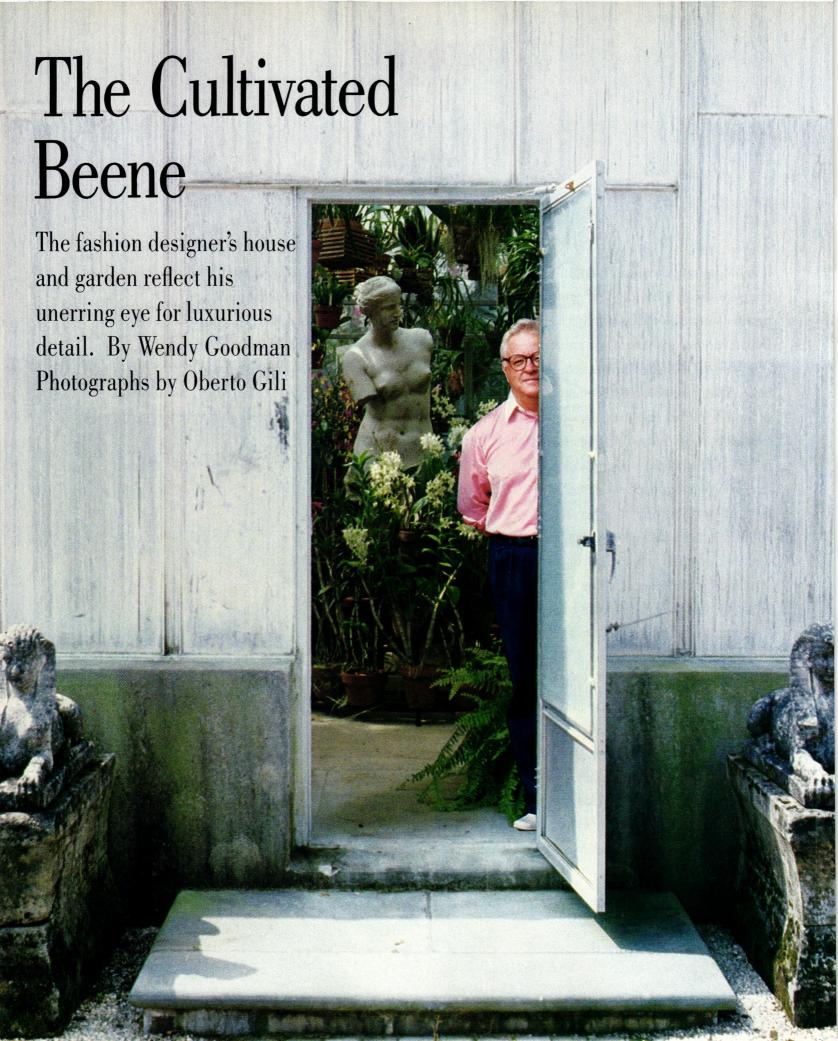
Balthasar van der Ast's vibrant bouquet exemplifies the meticulous detail found in 17th-century Dutch flower paintings.

decorating a Christmas tree, we do offer an extraordinary collection of Christmas ornaments, a festive assortment of gifts for children, and a selection of the books our editors would most like to see under their trees. For wonderment, we present the grandeur of Mar-a-Lago, once the home of Marjorie Merriweather Post and now, in a particularly 1980s twist, presided over by chatelains Donald and Ivana Trump. On a more human scale, though far from earthbound, is the Boston apartment of framer-artisan Roger Lussier with glimmering satin fabrics, engravings and drawings in splendid gilded frames, and charming painted Scandinavian furniture—an airy and inventive new take on luxury. The Philadelphia town house decorated by Robert Denning is filled with flowered fabrics, bold colors, and marvelous details all very much in the holiday mood. Wendy Goodman's story on Geoffrey Beene, considered by many to be the dean of American fashion, weaves its own web of enchantment connecting fashion and interior design. And for a



change of scenery, there's Laura Hunt's Colorado log house in the cowboy spirit. Esteemed art critic Rosamond Bernier reflects on the glory of 17th-century Dutch flower paintings. But busy modern working people may consider our article on robots, with its amazing photographs by Chris Callis and promise of ever-ready household help, the best gift of all.

Many Uorograd

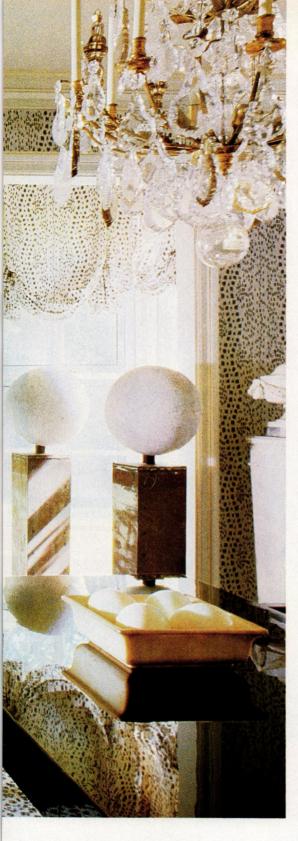






"Different patterns of black and white fascinate me because no matter what, the colors always balance each other"





ne would not suspect from looking at Geoffrey Beene that he is a revolutionary. It makes sense that the courtly soft-spoken gentleman was responsible for Lynda Bird Johnson's wedding dress and the favorite gowns of more than his share of First Ladies, but this same Beene is also the legendary fashion prophet who in 1966 turned gray flannel and tweed into gala wear, the next year designed a sequined football jersey and proclaimed it a ball gown, and in the early seventies put denim and sweatshirting under the party lights as well. It comes as no surprise then that Geoffrey Beene's country house is as marked by creative experiments as his long and exuberant career. His serene, cool, perfectly proportioned Palladian retreat gives no hint of the diverse riches inside.

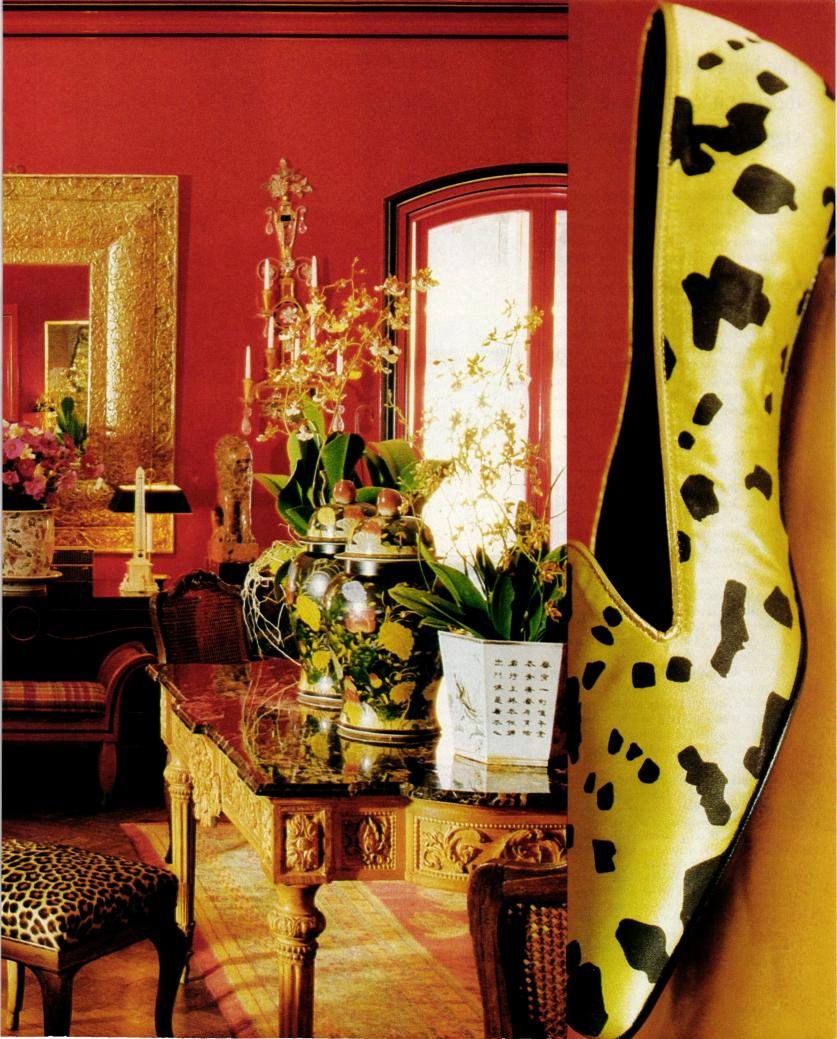
Beene found his house in 1980 through The New York Times Magazine. "I had been looking for two years, and I knew when I saw the ad that this house was it," he says. Designed by the Long Island firm of Innocenti & Webel, the house was built in 1969 as a birthday present from a wife to her husband so they would have a special place where they could spend time alone. The house is centered on eight acres. but the property feels larger. "I think the architects sat down and thought, 'How can we make this house a miniature estate?" says Beene. "The scaling is perfection. It rambles like an estate. You go from garden to park to pool to park. It reminds me of some of the houses in Neuilly outside of Paris."

What Beene encountered when he first stepped inside the house were "apple green walls and Chippendale furniture, including eight card tables in the living room. It felt like a casino in the country. The Chippendale fought the lightness of the architecture." When the designer moved in, he decorated with French Provincial furniture, and a French country

In the dining room, above left, spotted walls painted by muralist Jack Plaia blend with curtains from Brunschwig & Fils and an animal print carpet from Stark. Roman busts and marble and copper gateposts face a black-lacquer table from Karl Springer, NYC. Opposite below: The Palladian façade of the house was designed in 1969 by the Long Island firm of Innocenti & Webel. Right: An Indian stool is upholstered in Beene's black and white spotted print and is draped with a satin jacket from his 1989 resort collection.







## "The house is like a living theater; it's a series of vignettes and tableaux"

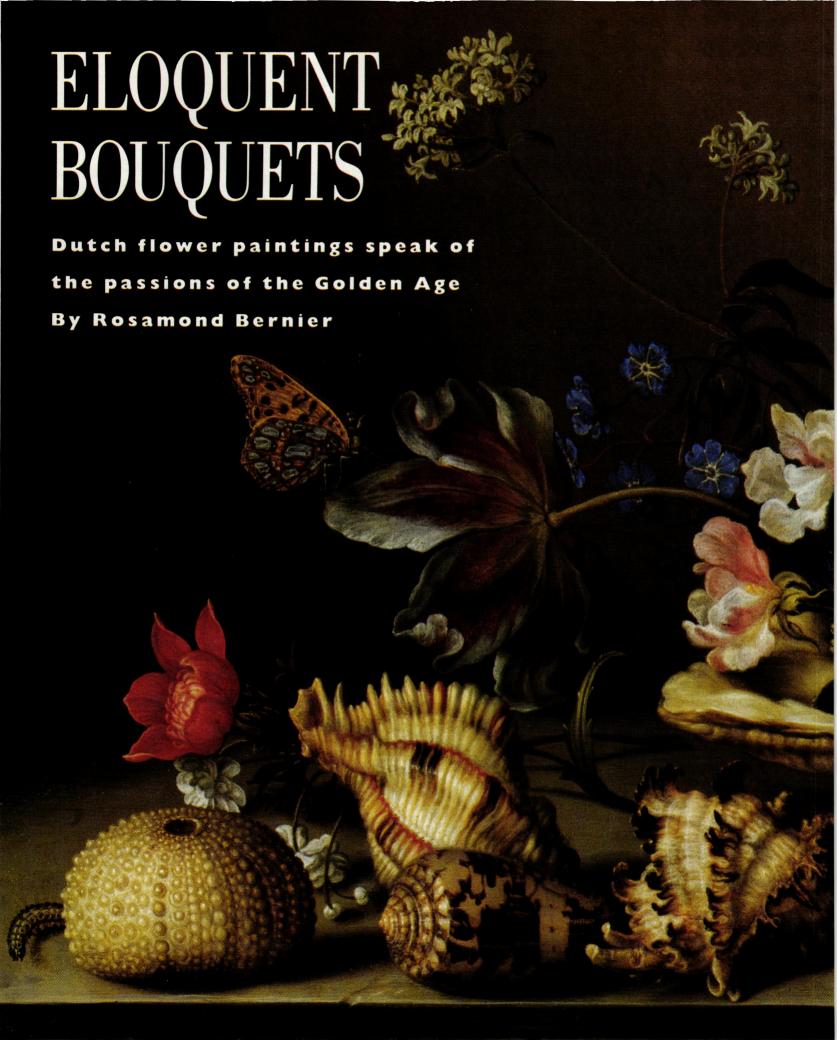
lightness defined the flavor of the house for a few years. "Then I began going to Japan," continues Beene. "An Oriental influence crept into my feelings about the house, I guess. I had always lived in homes done in neutrals—the living room here was stone gray. Suddenly I felt I needed color. I wanted to go from one room to another and be jolted visually, have different experiences. When I decided to paint the living room red, everyone thought, 'Oh, how ghastly! But let him do it, he's got to make the mistake himself.' I never felt it was a mistake. I discovered that red is a neutral, too; you can put almost anything with red and it works."

he house today reflects the many passions of Geoffrey Beene. "Almost every piece here has been collected from trips around the world, visits to odd, obscure, and remote places that are meaningful to me." In evidence everywhere is Beene's fascination and obsession-and extraordinary skill-with fabric, textures, and color. When describing the process of redecorating his house, he strews the conversation with "never before," "never imagined using," and "very unlike me" and yet concludes that all the major changes evolved naturally. "The decoration of each room is always ignited by one thing, usually a color or fabric. It's similar to doing a collection. You begin with one thing and build on what works-using trial and error." For example, the guest (Text continued on page 170)

Portraits of Beene's dachshunds and a 19th-century Viennese dog painting perch on a table, right, covered in a floral brocade by Manuel Canovas. Fringed silk gloves from Beene's 1989 fall collection find the perfect resting spot on an armchair upholstered in yellow and white striped silk dress fabric. Center right: Detail of a silk embroidered and beaded jacket from the 1989 resort collection against a bowl of roses from Beene's garden. Far right: Lining the walls of a guest room sleeping alcove are 19th-century trompe l'oeil canvas panels. The painted chair is Regency.

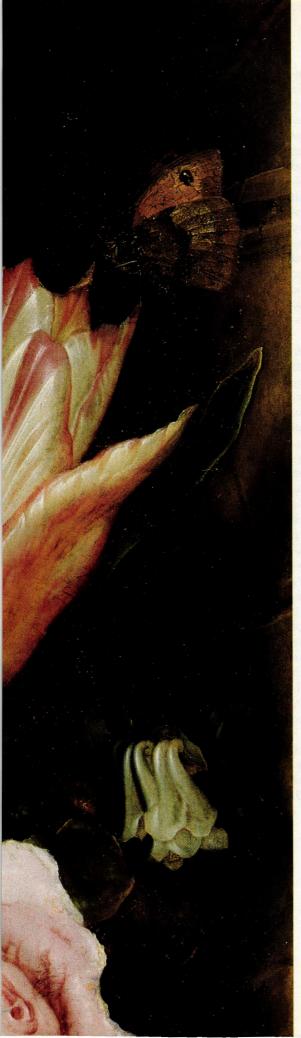












he language of flowers is in abeyance, people say. And it is certainly quite some time since a young bride was expected to secrete a single red carnation somewhere beneath her wedding dress for her bridegroom to discover at a later moment in the day.

It wasn't such a bad idea either, but the last bridegroom who is believed to have been favored in this way was Emperor Maximilian I on the occasion of his marriage in Ghent to Mary of Burgundy. That was just over five hundred years ago. To most of the New Yorkers who buy readymade bunches of flowers at Korean corner stores all over Manhattan, a carnation is just a carnation.

Flowers tug at us, even so. Around the corner from our pied-à-terre in New York, there is a shop that sells exceptionally beautiful roses, reputedly from Central America. In the late afternoon of Valentine's Day, 1989, there was a line four deep, all the way along the block. Once inside the shop, people slumped against the wall until it was their turn to go up to the counter. But when they walked out, they stood tall with eyes shining. "It was worth the wait," they said. Among them was many a suitor who had decided that, even if it ruined him, he was going to take a big bunch of those roses to the person of his choice. In this they followed the ancient principle—conspicuous above all in seventeenth-century Holland-of motivated ostentation. As everyone knows, the passion for tulips got completely out of hand in Holland in the 1630s. A single bulb could cost as much as a house, and the painter Jan van Goyen is said to have been one of many Dutchmen who bankrupted themselves by speculating in tulip futures.

Reading about that manic activity, we may think of the opposite extreme as it is represented in art—the pure and tranquil whiteness of the single lily that appears in many a painting of the Annunciation or the entirely subordinate role of flowers in the borders of illuminated manuscripts. Yet when people talk about flowers in art, they usually come back in the end to the seven-

Christoffel van den Berghe's Flower Piece with Shells, 1617, detail left, celebrates horticultural diversity.

Right: A magpie moth hovers above an iris, an anemone, and a 'York-and-Lancaster' rose in a detail from a panel by Johannes Goedaert.





teenth century in Holland. And when we look at the big, cluttered, and complicated still lifes that were painted there at that time, we may well think of them as painstaking records of actual flower arrangements. "That is how they lived," we think, as we count the number of individual species—35 here, 38 there, and as many as 72 in a little painting by Jan Brueghel the Elder—that the painter managed to get in. And we marvel at the sheer professionalism, the mastered heterogeneity, of both painter and seedsman.

But when I went to an exhibition called "A Prosperous Past: The Sumptuous Still Life in the Netherlands, 1600–1700" that was on view earlier this year at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, after showings in Delft, Holland, and Cambridge, Massachusetts, I learned that any such idea is completely mistaken. This revelation I owe in part to conversations with William B. Jordan, deputy director of the Kimbell, and in part to the writings of Sam Segal, the Dutch botanist and art historian who was the prime mover behind the show.

Nothing like the arrangements that we see in those paintings could possibly have existed in real life. For one thing, the flowers in them bloomed at different times of the year and could never have been in any one pot at any one time. Nor would the accessories—the yellow meadow ant, the damsel fly, the elephant hawk moth—have been on hand in any well-ordered household. The parrot would have been in its cage and the lizard on its way to the taxidermist. Even bouquets of flowers, as such, played little or no part in seventeenth-century Dutch domestic life.

So what was the point of those huge, elaborate, cosmopolitan confections? The question is easily answered. They were

displays of wealth, power, and discernment, and they were directly related to the prowess of Dutch traders. Dutch explorers, Dutch collectors, and Dutch lords of the sea. Everything about these paintings was known to cost a lot of money. This was true of the Ming vases of the Wan Li period (1573–1620) in which the flowers were often displayed. It was true of the silver-gilt mounts made for the vases. It was true of every last flower in the bunch, any one of which the informed observer could price to the nearest florin. It was true of the rare and expensive shells, the exotic animals, the superlative wines, the champion fruit, and even the occasional objet d'art that was brought on in triumph (though how discreetly!) in these paintings.

The Dutch had a word for them—pronkstilleven-which really means "show-off still lifes." To exactly what extent they were ostentatious—though with an occasional side bet on the hereafter—is a matter to which Sam Segal has lately opened all our eyes. He has had a remarkable career. Trained as a botanist, he received a doctorate at the University of Amsterdam and in 1960 became the first head of its Department of Plant Ecology. In 1970 he began a second career as an art historian to which he has devoted himself full-time since 1975. Thanks to this twofold specialization, Segal can look at any given "showoff still life" and identify not only every flower within it but also the date it was introduced to Holland, the season in which it bloomed, the specific circumstances of its arrival, and its rank in the hierarchy of ostentation. Equally important, he can elucidate the auxiliary objects in each painting—the Ming vases, the Indo-Pacific shells, the lizard, the dragonfly, the fallen leaves, the greedy little mouse, the cracks in the stonework.

On one level, the *pronkstilleven*—the pronks, if I may so call them—were celebrations of the status that Holland had lately (*Text continued on page 170*)

The parrot and the Ming vase in Jan Baptist van Fornenburgh's still life, right, would have belonged to a wealthy household. A nibbling mouse commonly embodied the sin of gluttony. Fallen leaves are reminders of the ravages of time. Above left: The biological accuracy of Johannes Goedaert's panel reflects the artist's training as a naturalist.





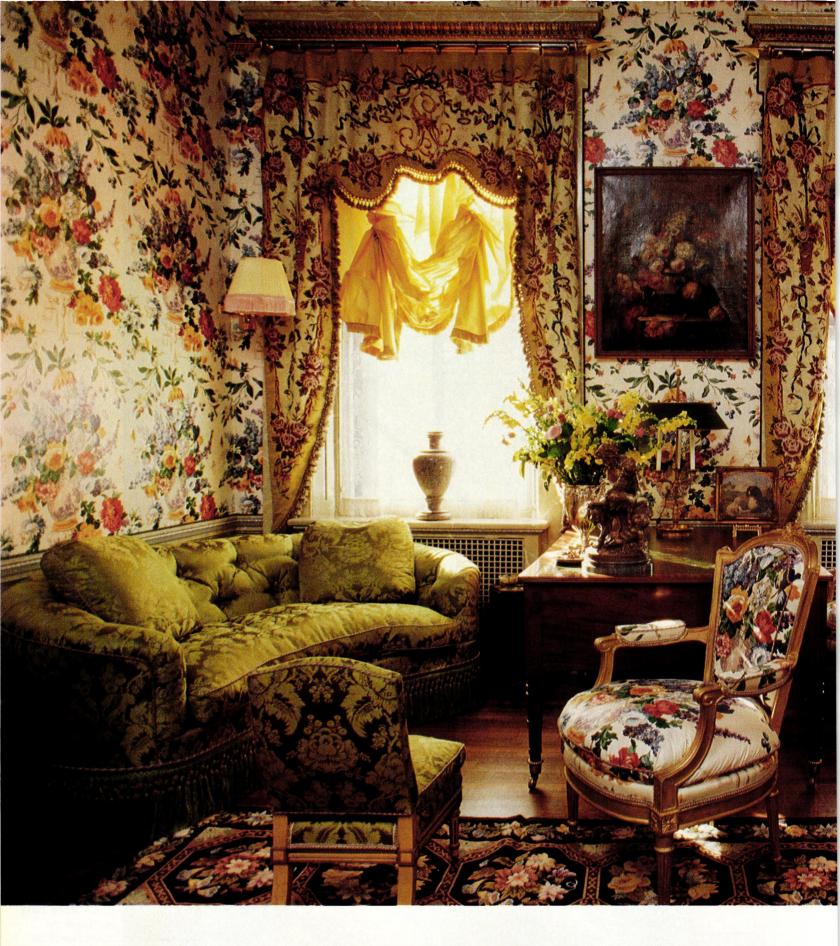


## Victorian Revival

For a Philadelphia family, Robert Denning reinterprets the grand style of an earlier era. By Brooks Adams Photographs by William Waldron



One of a suite of mother-of-pearl inlaid Louis Philippe chairs upholstered in Aubusson tapestry, <u>left</u>, stands at the foot of a staircase painted with faux finishes. An 18thcentury Anglo-Indian portrait hangs against Fonthill wallpaper. The carpet is English. Opposite: A tufted French slipper chair and an 18th-century Italian gilt armchair adjoin the doorway to the morning room where a Victorian chandelier lights a Biedermeier table. The morning room wallpaper and border are from Brunschwig. Details see Resources.



For her drawing room, the owner asked Robert Denning to "make me a garden"



he couple who bought the 1857 town house near Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square were looking for a change. She had grown up and raised her family on the Main Line but had never lived in town. Her husband, a world-famous surgeon, had always enjoyed the time he spent in Philadelphia and New York and agreed with her that life in the city might be fun. When they first saw the house, the windows had been boarded up after extensive damage from a fire and they had to investigate the interior by flashlight. She

didn't think it was big enough. He thought it was plenty big. As soon as the property came up for auction, neither of them hesitated to buy it.

The couple had previously lived in suburban Haverford, where they had gardens, a stream, and plenty of room for their poodles. Moving into the city entailed a complete change of style, which led them to decorator Robert Denning of Denning & Fourcade. When the wife called Denning in New York, he told her what fun it would be to do a house in Philadelphia, because his first job had been there. As an eighteenyear-old buyer for a Philadelphia decorator's shop, he used to search in New York for "the sort of trendy, jazzy things that made a clean sweep of rooms after the war." Later, Denning had also worked with Vincent Fourcade on Henry McIlhenny's house on Rittenhouse Square, doing the ballroom and living quarters. Now he could bring his mature "new Victorian' vision to bear on an old Victorian building, which also had attractive alterations dating from around 1910.

Basic repairs and remodeling were the first step. The fire had left the neo-Adam mirror in the dining room looking "charcoalbroiled," and much of the ornamental plasterwork in the same style had to be recast. The entrance hall was reoriented to create a rotunda-shaped morning room, which enhances the Victorian atmosphere.

Denning used "everything" the owners had on the Main Line, but when transferred to the five-story town house with thirteen and a half foot ceilings, "it still



Blenheim chintz from Rose Cumming covers the walls and a pair of Louis XVIstyle fauteuils in the drawing room, left. More bouquets are stitched into 19th-century English needlepoint curtains and a needlepoint Rosecore carpet. Above: Sèvres biscuit porcelain on the mantel. Below: Parisian fringe and tassels on a sofa.



wasn't enough." Although the wife had already started stockpiling furniture in the basement in Haverford, further shopping trips—to Europe, to New York, to antiques shops on Philadelphia's Pine Street, to a little place she knew about in Bryn Mawr—were obviously necessary. She

and Denning came up with a heady mix of French, Italian, German, and English finds—a sumptuous ensemble that is remarkably unstuffy. This is a house where children back from college can put their feet up, where poodles are at home with passementerie. The wife, an advocate of animal rights, insists that Sophie, the standard poodle, is welcome to lie on the velvet sofa in the sitting room. Appropriately, a collection of dog portraits hangs above the sofa.

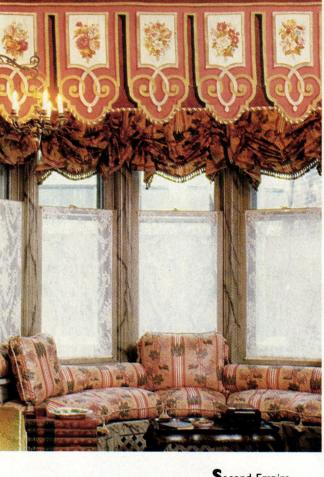
ne acquisition Denning had to talk his client into was the huge bronze chan-

delier that presides over a Biedermeier table in the morning room: "This kind of thing looks so big and dark on the floor of an antiques shop that she was scared at first." But it is just the kind of oversize fixture that would have been in the original house and that again gives it a correct sense of scale. The dining room, now regal in pink damask wallcovering, has become what the wife calls "my Italian stage set." She and Denning found a suite of beat-up gold and white nineteenth-century Italian salon chairs and a matching settee in a New York thrift shop. Restored and recovered in dark green leather, these pieces now surround a dining table with a faux marbre finish. When it is pulled up in front of the fireplace, the settee makes the grand Adamesque room seem almost clubby.

Among the most extraordinary features of the house are the reinterpretations of nineteenth-century window treatments. The elaborate lambrequins in the dining and sitting rooms could be right out of Peter Thornton's book *Authentic Décor*. Elaborate curtains are a specialty of Denning, who brought Jean-Charles Morinière over from Paris to do the work. (Morinière has since opened a branch in New York.)







Second Empire mahogany armchairs in the sitting room, below left, are tufted in leather from Hermes with brass studs. The owners' collection of dog portraits is displayed above a sofa upholstered in a Brunschwig gaufré velvet, next to which Robert Denning placed an English glass and mahogany screen. Above: Clarence House's Regency Column chintz was used as a wallcovering and for curtains and window-seat cushions. Lace shades from Greeff have been lowered beneath an Aubusson valance. Above left: A Chinese lacquer sconce in the dining room.



In the dining room mid 19th century Italian chairs upholstered in leather surround a faux marbre table. The 18th-century chandelier is also Italian; the telescoping Sheffield candlesticks are George III. A fire screen stands at the edge of the Savonnerie carpet. The Adam-style overmantel and plasterwork have been recast, and the walls are clad in Syon Damask from Lee Jofa. Velvet valances are Second Empire.

## Denning is most pleased with the master bedroom, which captures "that 1910 Philadelphia –Long Island feeling"

Denning is most pleased with the master bedroom, which he feels captures "that 1910 Philadelphia—Long Island feeling." Characteristic touches are the painted Louis XVI bed angled rakishly out into the room, the George III chandelier decked out in fringed shades, and the play of bold striped silk curtains against petit point upholstery and flowered chintz walls.

Because the one thing the wife really missed from the Haverford house was her

flower beds, she asked Denning to "make me a garden" in the Philadelphia drawing room. A pair of nineteenthcentury English curtains introduced the desired blossoms and foliage-rendered in needlework-but also included "jarring pur-ples," to their new owner's despair. Denning finally found the right fabric for the walls and for a pair of Louis XVI-style fauteuils. As soon as the intensely floral chintz was in place, it "softened the curtains, as if the two fabrics, old and new, were married," the client reports. In her dealings with Denning, she soon learned that "you cannot anguish over a color that doesn't come in right at first. You've

got to have faith." And although Denning maintains that the drawing room isn't finished yet, his client is content. "I'm in my city garden," she explains.

Editor: Jacqueline Gonnet

The Louis XVI bed in the master bedroom, right, is upholstered in a variant of the Lee Jofa chintz used for the walls. The floral pattern is set off by bold striped Cowtan & Tout silk curtains. An Aubusson carpet reflects the sinuous lines of an Italian Rococo gilt mirror. Above left: A hand-beaded antique valance on the mantel in the owners' daughter's bedroom.



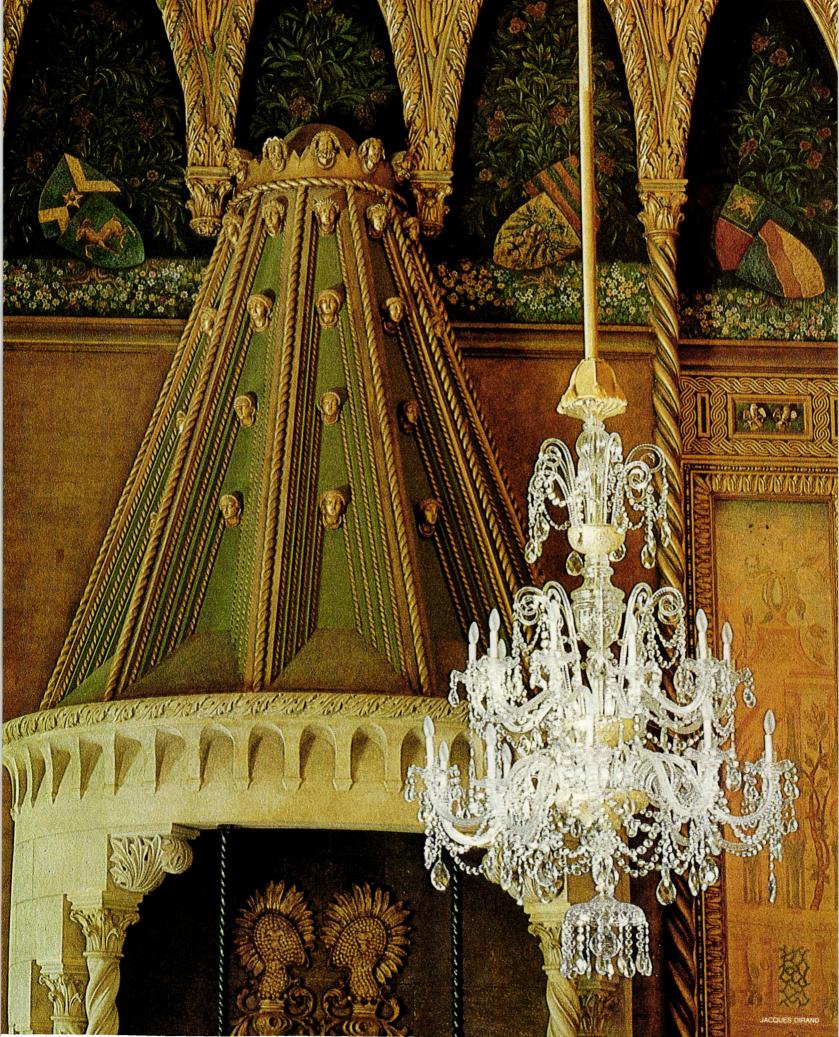






In 1927 cereal heiress
Marjorie Merriweather Post
built Mar-a-Lago, the ultimate
castle in the sand. Fifty-nine
years later, Ivana Trump
moved in. By Charles Gandee

THE PALM BEACH STORY



ne winter day in 1982, Donald and Ivana Trump decided that it was too cold in New York. Not being a couple to suffer needlessly, they hopped a flight to Palm Beach for the weekend to warm up. But it rained. Which was a bore. So Donald called the concierge at the Breakers and ordered a limousine to distract them with an afternoon drive. Cruising along palm-lined avenues, the enthusiastic driver gave his captive audience the grand tour of the resort's great houses, complete with running commentary: "Estée Lauder lives there, Rose Kennedy lives there..." And then he eased the stretch Cadillac onto South Ocean Boulevard, where he pulled up to the gates in front of Mar-a-Lago, the greatest of the great houses, bar none. "Nobody lives there," he said. "It's for sale." Which was all his passengers needed to hear.

A knock on the caretaker's door and a request to look over the property were met with suspicious resistance. But true to form, Donald and Ivana persisted. They were even willing to wait in the car while their reluctant guide called New York to confirm that their bank balance was adequate to the financial task at hand. It was, and off went the wide-eyed couple on a tour of the 118-room house. Although Mar-a-Lago was criticized as an architectural bastard when completed in 1927, its exotic aesthetic caught Ivana's eye. She didn't mind a bit that the dining room of the more or less Mediterranean-style house was adapted from the Chigi Palace in

Construction began in 1923 on the Hispano-Moresque—style extravaganza, above right and below, designed by Marion Sims Wyeth with Joseph Urban. Preceding pages: A gilded detail from the salon at Mar-a-Lago. Ivana Trump in a wool jersey evening dress from Geoffrey Beene's 1989 resort collection. Styled by Wendy Goodman. Details see Resources.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: LUCIEN CAPEHART; UPIBETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS; COURTESY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM BEACH COUNTY; ALFRED EISENSTAEDT/IJFE MAGAZINE © 1965, TIME INC. COURTESY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM BEACH COUNTY; ALFRED EISENSTAEDT/IJFE MAGAZINE © 1965, TIME INC.



The two mistresses of Mar-a-Lago have in common a taste for fancy houses and fancy dress. Far left: Ivana Trump, in 1988, hosting a Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach benefit.

Left: Marjorie
Merriweather Post in costume for a 1927 party at the Everglades Club.

off Palm Beach.









"We didn't feel the urge to put our personal stamp on the house because it was already beautiful"





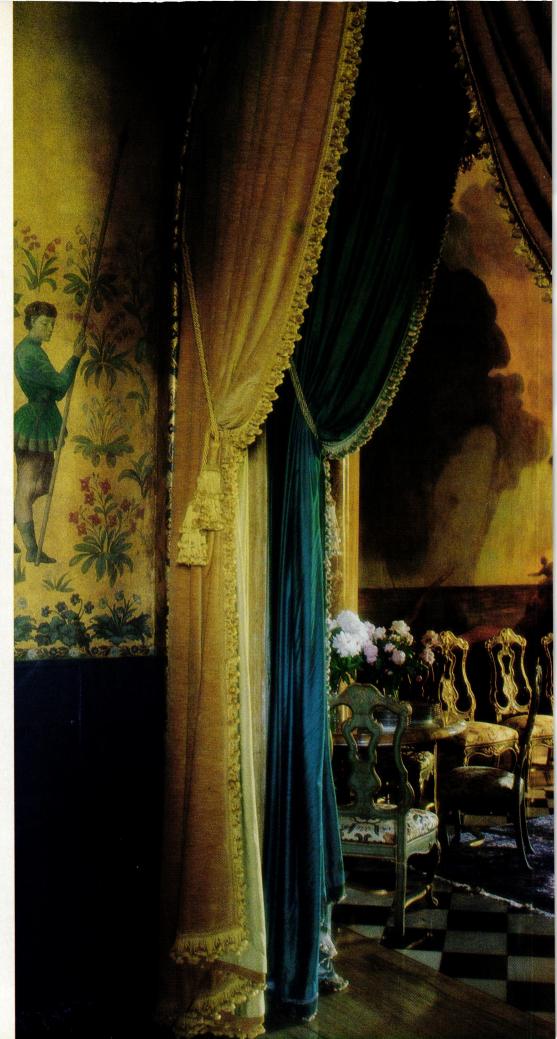


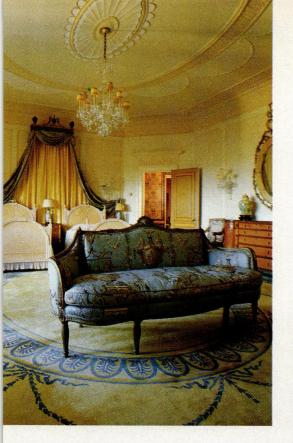
Rome, that the living room ceiling was modeled after the Accademia in Venice, or that other rooms drew their inspiration from Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, French, Italian, Norwegian, and English sources. Ivana liked the I'll-take-them-all attitude toward different periods and styles. "It's absolutely spectacular," she said. So Donald made the owners an offer, \$15 million, which, as it turned out, they could easily refuse. Donald said that was fine. "You have my number. Call me."

Time passed, and in 1985 Ivana received a call from a friend saying the house was still for sale. Donald swung into action, setting up a luncheon to discuss, as he would say, the deal. "You can't offer them less than you did before," advised Ivana. But Donald could, and Donald did. MAR-A-LAGO'S BARGAIN PRICE TAG ROCKS COMMUNITY blared the headline in the *Palm Beach Daily News* when it was announced that Trump had paid a cut-rate \$5 million for the house, \$3 million for its contents, and \$2 million for one acre of adjacent Atlantic Ocean beachfront.

lthough Donald Trump's bargain outraged the citizens of Palm Beach—what did this mean for property values?—they were also concerned, to put it mildly, about their new neighbors' agenda. Which was not surprising. After all, the Trumps are so rich and so famous and so hopelessly indiscreet about both that a volatile mixture of envy and contempt seems to follow their every highprofile move. Their move into Palm Beach was no exception. Why did the couple want the house? Would Donald develop the property? Would he subdivide the seventeen-acre site into building lots and turn Mar-a-Lago into a clubhouse? A condominium? A hotel? Would Ivana obliterate the otherworldly interiors created by Viennese designer Joseph Urban and redecorate the architectural landmark in the same flashy mirror-and-marble style she had lavished on the Trump hotels and casinos in Atlantic City and the Trump skyscrapers and shopping complexes in Manhattan? Or were the upstart Trumps making a bid for membership in the resort's haute society?

"No! No! No!" declares Ivana, clearly rankling at all the idle and, to her mind, malicious speculation. "We wouldn't subdivide seventeen acres and build a few houses to sell. When we go into business, we go into big business." And as for that







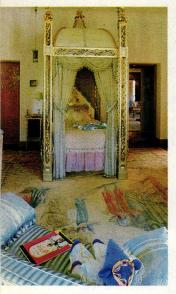


The dining room, opposite, as it is today, and, left, as it was in 1965.
Above: Gilt cherubs in a niche off the living room support a console table that holds a perennial "flower arrangement" made of seashells.

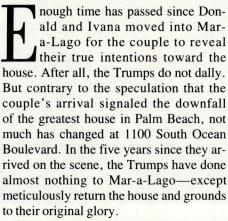
The ornamental plasterwork of the Adamesque guest room ceiling, above, is mirrored in the carpet pattern. Right: Onyx marble and ceramic tile line the combination office-bathroom that Marjorie Merriweather Post installed in her private suite.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
JACQUES DIRAND (3); ALFRED
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1965, TIME INC.; JACQUES DIRAND





nasty rumor that the Trumps annually apply for membership in Palm Beach clubs and are annually rejected? "We have never applied," she retorts emphatically. "We are not club people. Besides there's nothing outside Mar-a-Lago that we don't have inside. We have everything—a pool, tennis courts, a beach." Instead, according to Ivana, the altogether unremarkable reason she and Donald bought the palatial estate in Florida is that they work hard all week and like to get away from Manhattan and their Trump Tower triplex on weekends with their three children. In late spring, summer, and early fall the family retreats to twenty rooms on a ten-acre waterfront estate in Greenwich, Connecticut, which until 1985 left the winter weekends free.



If Marjorie Merriweather Post were alive today, she would have no trouble recognizing the monument she erected to herself, to her fortune, and, it was said, to the social aspirations of her second husband, E. F. Hutton. Except for an extraordinary number of Trump family photographs deployed throughout the house, everything is as it was when Post died in 1973 and turned the house over to the U.S. government as a retreat for the president and visiting dignitaries. (In 1981 the government gave the house back to the Post Foundation because the annual tab for minimal maintenance was \$1 million.) In a rare show of aesthetic deference, the Trumps have bowed to Post's exotic vision of luxury. From the (Text continued on page 170)

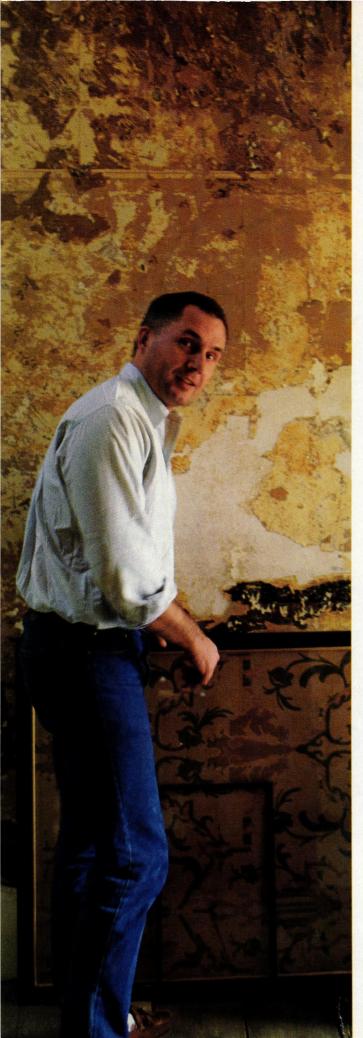
oseph Urban displayed his talent as a children's book illustrator in the fairy-tale bedroom, right, he created for Dina Merrill, Post's daughter. Now the domain of eight-year-old Ivanka Trump, the room's silvered canopy bed, top left, squirrel door handles, center left, and nursery rhyme bathroom tiles, left, have lost none of their charm.









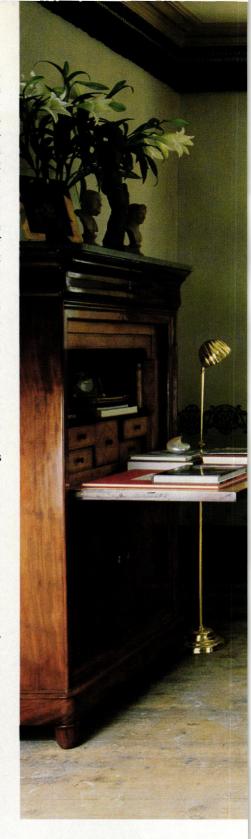


tanding in the hallway of David Roos's handsome early nineteenth century house in London is like waiting in the wings of one of England's old, faded, but still grand theaters. Beyond, you can glimpse the warm light and seductive colors of the set—Scene: a smart drawing room. Time: the present—but offstage everything is stripped to the essentials. The bare floorboards in Roos's hall have been rubbed to a silvery sheen and the plaster walls scraped to reveal vestiges of each succeeding layer of decoration, right back 150 years to the original trompe l'oeil rustication on a tawny stone-colored ground. A few well-chosen props leaning against the wall—a pretty 1830s cast-iron fire grate and a large framed gouache-onpaper design for a brocade pattern—make it clear that the decoration of this house is a drama in progress.

As you look at Roos's bold and theatrical decorative effects, it comes as no surprise to learn that he trained first as a stage designer. But the instant staple-gun, it'llbe-all-right-on-opening-night approach was not for him. Roos is a perfectionist: every element in an interior must be considered, everything must be beautifully crafted, and all the parts must work together, perfectly. Which is why for the time being, until just the right carpets are found or, more likely, made, there are no carpets in his house. In the same way he prefers to live with his "Pompeian ruin" hallway. "It's very palazzo," says Roos in a typical throwaway line. He then goes on to describe with characteristic enthusiasm, and a touch of amused irony, just how complex the intended brocade wallcovering will be, with hand-blocking in various colors and, like many Roos fabrics, a lot of hand-painted finishing on top of that. "It will cost the earth just to do two walls. Oh well!"

After decorating various apartments for himself, Roos bought this house in Hackney in London's East End about two years ago. Like others who care about architec-

David Roos, <u>left</u>, with a framed design for brocade to cover his "Pompeian ruin" hallway walls. <u>Right</u>: A Baltic Biedermeier center table, a William IV sofa, c. 1835, and a Roos-designed folding screen in the front drawing room. A Charles X desk faces the mantelpiece. Fringed cornices, a lace and passementerie valance, and Roos's red-flocked wallpaper interspersed with painted gold stars are touches of fanciful luxe.





## Restoration Drama

Decorator David Roos sets the stage for life in his London town house By Stephen Calloway Photographs by James Mortimer



ture, he had tired of cramped apartments with badly shaped rooms carved out of once decently proportioned spaces—the sort of places that have nothing but a smart address to recommend them. He followed the adage of today's New Georgians, "Go where the architecture is," and immediately made his mark in a street of rainbowhued exteriors by painting the front door and windows, including the glazing bars, glossy black. It is an appropriate treatment for the façade of this dignified little row house, and it is a very David Roos trick to be brave enough to be different and bold enough to make his personal style statement by being reticent.

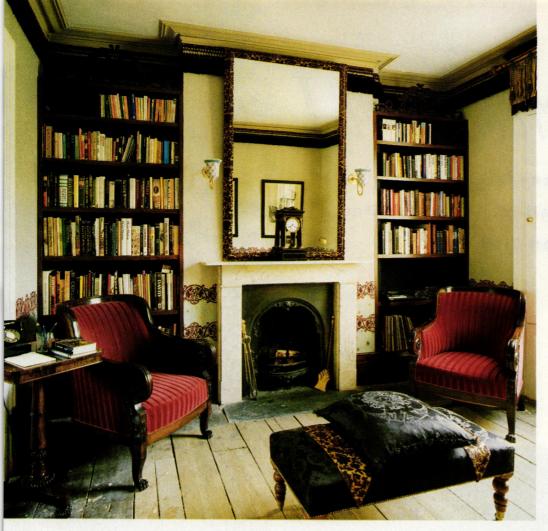
Inside, it is a different story. There the Roos reticence meets the even more famous Roos extravagance. The newly decorated rooms are a distillation of his style, a celebration of richness in color, detail, and materials that reflects the distinctive grand luxe he has made his own in a decade of work for sympathetic clients. Though little of this work has been published, because those who commission very expensive decoration often like to be discreet, every project has added something to the Roos repertoire. For a lavish scheme in India he directed local craftsmen in the carving,

Roos pins up fabric swatches, tassels, and project sketches in his basement studio, left. Below: Bedroom walls are covered in Gothic damask from Christopher Hyland. Upholsterer's tacks below the ceiling suggest a miniature cornice. Matching damask is tufted on the headboard and hung over cupboards. Details see Resources.

The Roos reticence meets the
even more famous Roos
extravagance, the grand luxe
he has made his own







painting, and gilding of a remarkable interior, whose brilliance he matched with carpets of his own design and custom-made upholstered furniture from England and passementerie from Portugal. Another major commission took him to Sweden, where he created a mad, riotously colored Arabian Nights fantasy in the unlikely setting of a grand turn-of-the-century hotel with a pale green façade. At the same time, however, he seized the opportunity to take a firsthand look at the clear simple lines of Scandinavian Neoclassical architecture and furnishings and returned with a new interest in playing with big Swedish pieces.

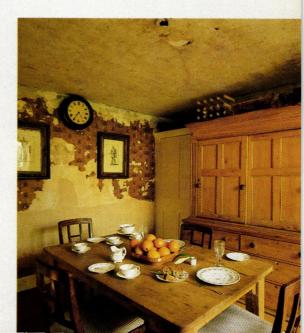
n the early days of his career, Roos's most revered models were the French stylists Christian Bérard and, particularly, Jean-Michel Frank, but where he once admired their cool chic, it is now perhaps the whimsy of Bérard and the attention to detail and use of exquisite materials in Frank's interiors that he finds most appealing. Roos also talks with great enthusiasm of the rooms created in Paris and Venice after the war by the legendary Charles de Beistégui and of things done thirty years ago by Renzo Mongiardino,

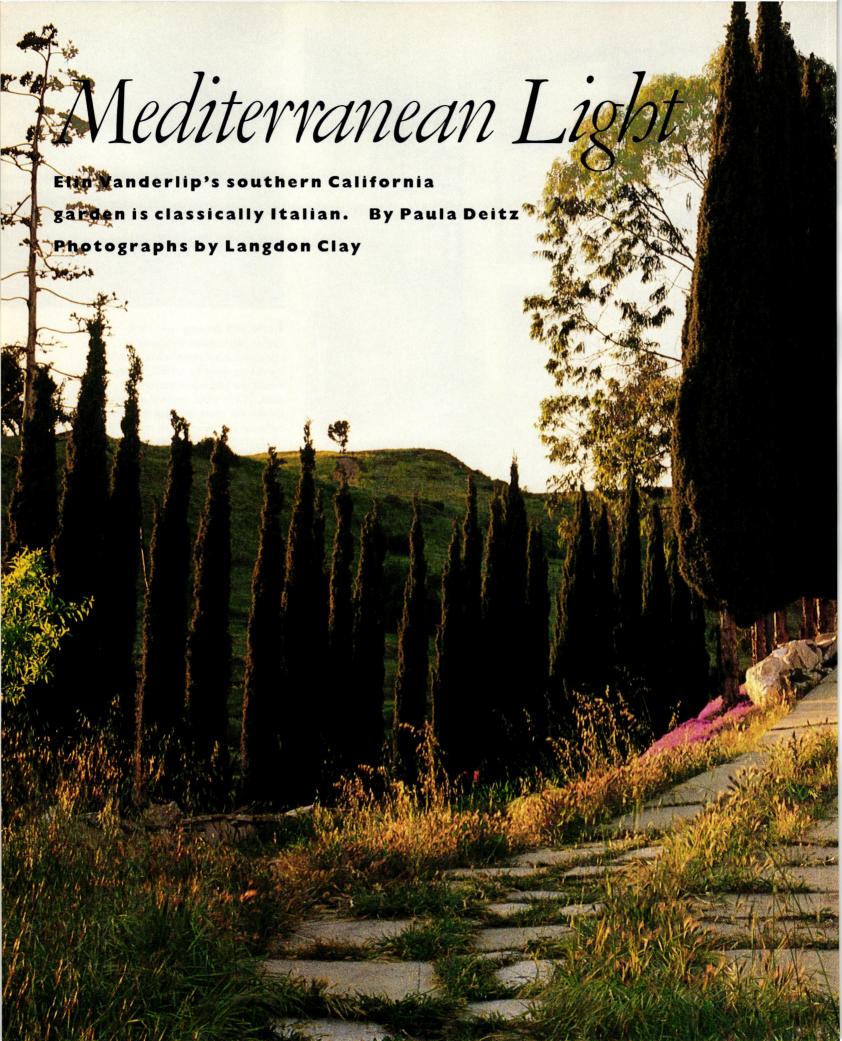
another theater designer turned decorator.

The showpiece of the house is the double drawing room on the raised ground floor, which retains a pair of elegant pale marble mantelpieces. These, along with other surviving architectural features, such as the original elaborate plaster cornices and the baseboards, have been carefully restored. Roos treated the two rooms as one decoratively, although each is furnished and arranged as a distinct area and they can be divided by large folding doors. A sense of order and symmetry is given by matching elements in the two rooms. The windows at each end are uncurtained but have wonderfully rich valances of colored passementerie and black lace that hang from elaborate poles with ornate finials. Similarly, above both fireplaces are tall looking glasses flanked by matching pairs of sconces with hand-painted glass shades. The mirrors are canted out from the walls to give more intriguing reflections, and their frames are covered in a cut-pile velvet in yellow and purplish brown. A great Roos favorite, this fabric appears in appliqué stripes on a low stool and suggests a distinctly seventeenth-century opulence. Against the (Text continued on page 174)

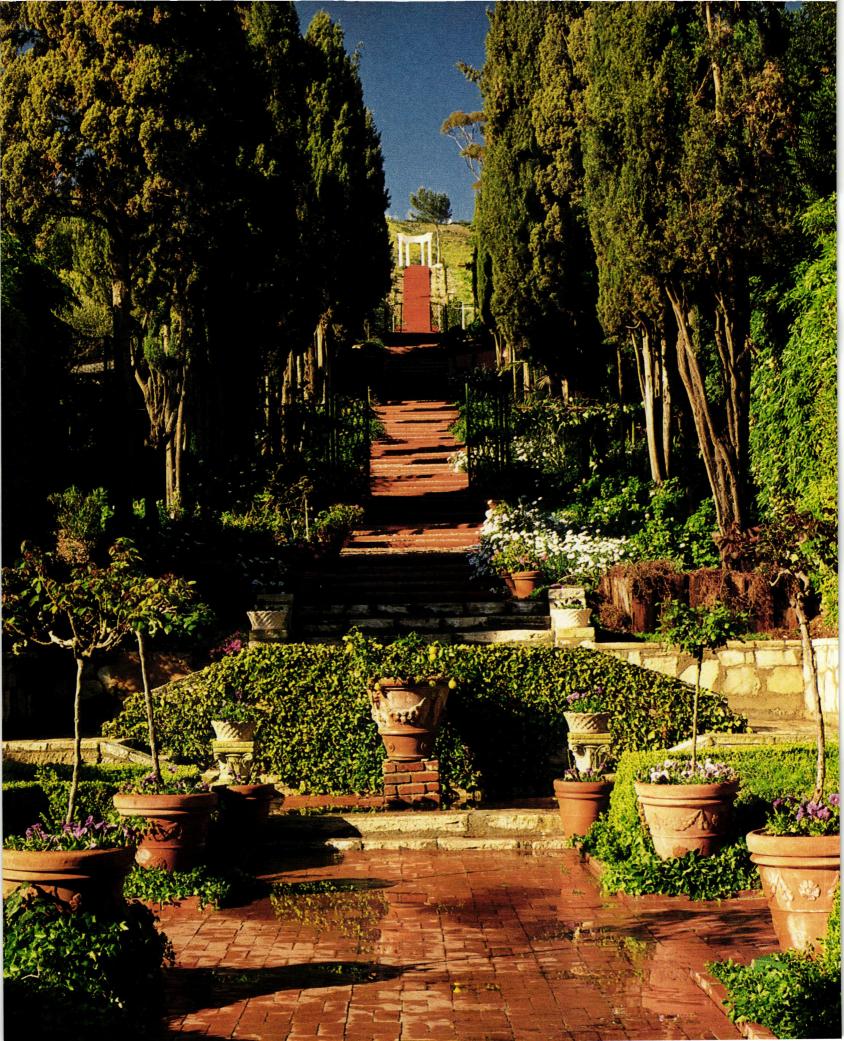


n the back drawing room, left, English Neoclassical armchairs of mahogany and striped velvet flank a mantel crowned by a 19th-century French painted-wood and ormolu clock. A low stool covered in black damask has contrasting bands of the same cut-pile velvet Roos applied to the mirror frame. He also painted the glass shades of the sconces and designed scrolled fretwork cresting for the twin bookcases. Above: One of a pair of gilt armchairs in the neo-baronial style of the 1830s, upholstered in a custom Roos horsehair fabric. Below: The kitchen table and cupboards are 19th-century English pine. Late Georgian country chairs have seat covers of black and white ticking. Roos has mounted a Victorian station clock and Neoclassical framed prints against exposed layers of earlier wall decoration.









hen, in a letter to a friend, Pliny the Younger describes his Tuscan villa and its gardens on the lower slopes of the Apennines, he succeeds in setting every detail of the estate before the reader's eyes: "A semicircle...densely shaded by the cypress trees...roses grow there and the cool shadow alternates with the pleasant warmth of the sun...." Centuries later, those vivid descriptions come to mind on the grounds of a villa in southern California, where the sharp contrasts of light and shadow, the glistening blue waters of the Pacific, and hills rising from the sea create a landscape that could almost be the Italy Pliny knew.

Halfway up a canyon on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, just south of Los Angeles, the Tuscan-style Villa Narcissa and its nine small guest cottages clustered along steep winding paths—only a hint of terracotta tile roofs shows through dense greenery—possess all the intimate charm of an Italian hill town. Although the villa and the plan for the surrounding landscape were created in the 1920s, it is owing to the present owner, Elin Vanderlip, a woman devoted to the conservation of art and architecture, that this complex of buildings and its restored gardens are now enjoying their finest moment.

Mrs. Vanderlip is the founder and president of Friends of French Art, an American organization that has privately raised almost \$3 million in the past ten years to restore important works of French art and architecture in both France and the United States. In 1984 she was decorated as a commandeur des arts et des lettres. This year Jack Lang, the cultural minister of France, gave a fête in honor of Mrs. Vanderlip's seventieth birthday. While shepherding her group through France, in an annual movable feast of a house party held at various châteaus and gardens, her eye has never been idle. The restoration of the Villa Narcissa reflects a personal taste informed by life and travels abroad.

Born and raised in Norway, where she still owns an island, Mrs. Vanderlip married her American husband, Kelvin Cox

Some of the cypresses brought from Rome in 1920, left, still line the northern vista to the Doric temple. Right: On the Hortensia Terrace, faience lions perch on stone tables from Vicenza against a background of Italian marble columns in a green niche of Pittosporum undulatum.



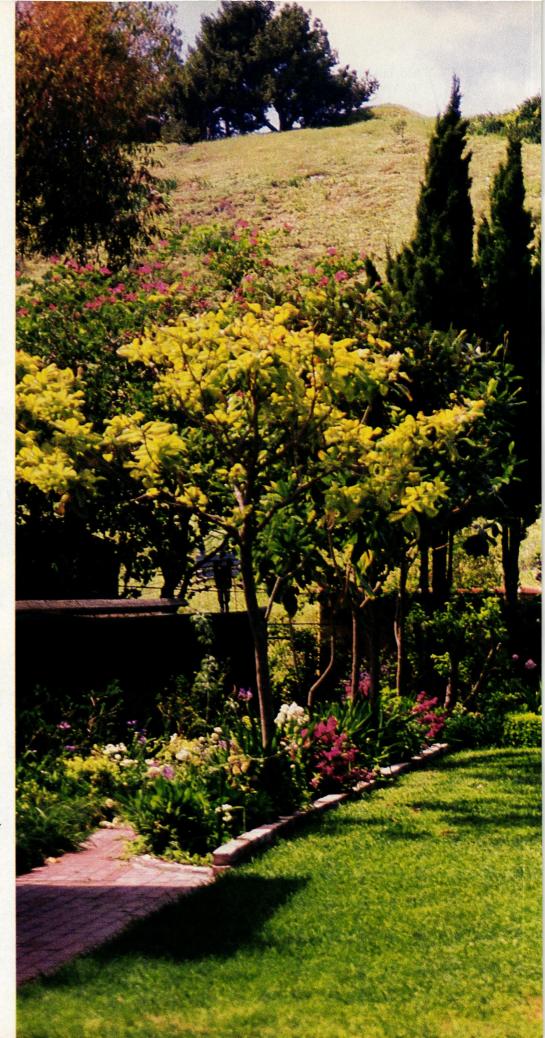
Vanderlip, in 1946. Her father-in-law, the New York banker Frank A. Vanderlip, had purchased the original 16,200-acre Spanish land grant of Rancho Palos Verdes in 1912 with the hope of developing the peninsula. But it was not until the 1920s that he established the early automobile suburb called Palos Verdes Estates, working with Olmsted Brothers of Boston as his landscape architects (Frederick Law Olmsted, the founder of the firm, is best known as the codesigner of New York's Central Park). Vanderlip's own villa built in 1924 and named after his wife, Narcissa, was sited, with the help of a meteorologist, at an elevation above the fog that comes rolling in over the sea. Overlooking the surf at Portuguese Bend and, farther out, Catalina Island, the rustic villa in the form of a farmstead and courtyard was a guesthouse for a main residence that was never built.

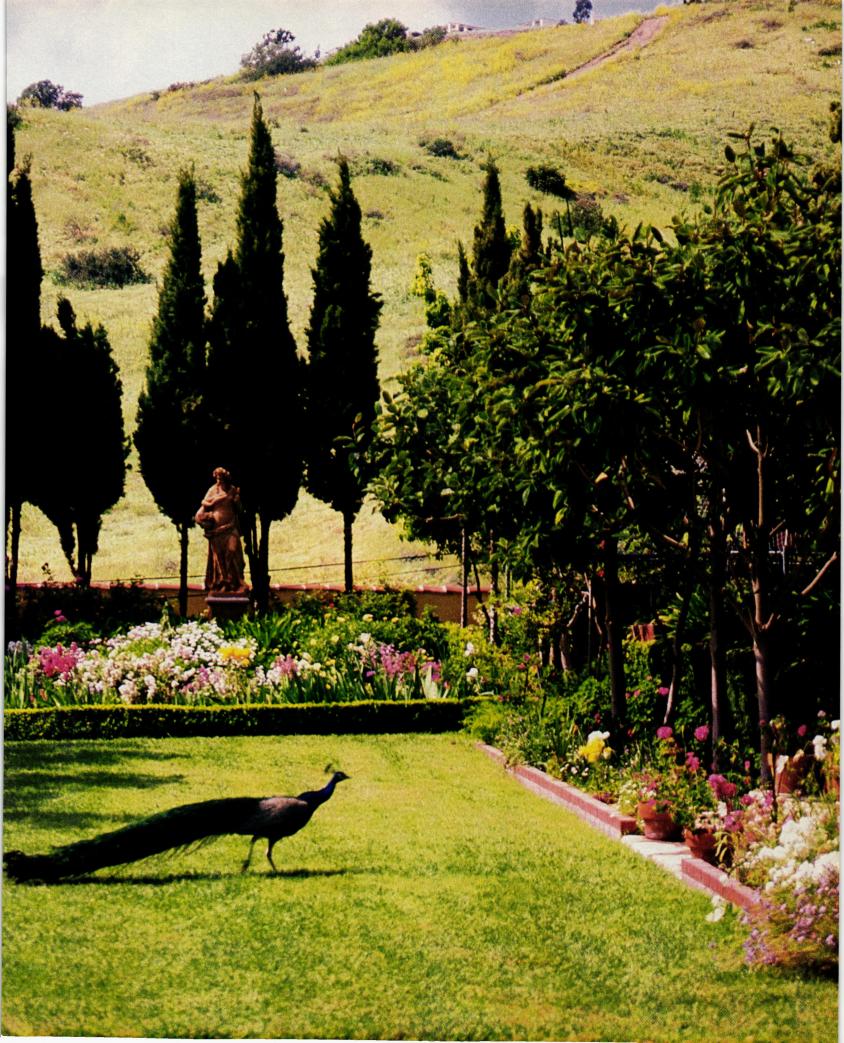
as laid out by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., who built his own house nearby. Terraces and an orangerie at the villa were home to many exotic birds, and the call of peacocks remains a distinctive part of the ambiance. The major and still most dramatic feature of the landscape is a 268-step cypress allée that climbs a steep northern slope from the house. Two years ago Elin Vanderlip, who has been widowed since 1956, was finally able to acquire the upper half of the allée from other family members and begin a serious restoration of this landmark vista.

Ravaged twice by brushfires, the thick old cypresses brought over from Rome in 1920 recall the towering trees at the Villa d'Este in Tivoli as drawn by Fragonard from the foot of the steep ascent. In her 1904 book *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, Edith Wharton's description of going down the steps at the Villa d'Este captures the mood of the Villa Narcissa as well: "There are such depths of mystery in the infinite green distances and in the cypress-shaded pools of the lower garden, that one has a sense of awe rather than of pleasure in descending from one level to another of darkly rustling green."

In front of a forest of avocados and pines and a peacock-proof walled garden, the old

One of several resident peacocks struts across the lawn of a side garden with a raised cutting bed for large bouquets. A semi-rondelle of cypress curves behind an Italian terra-cotta statue of Summer.









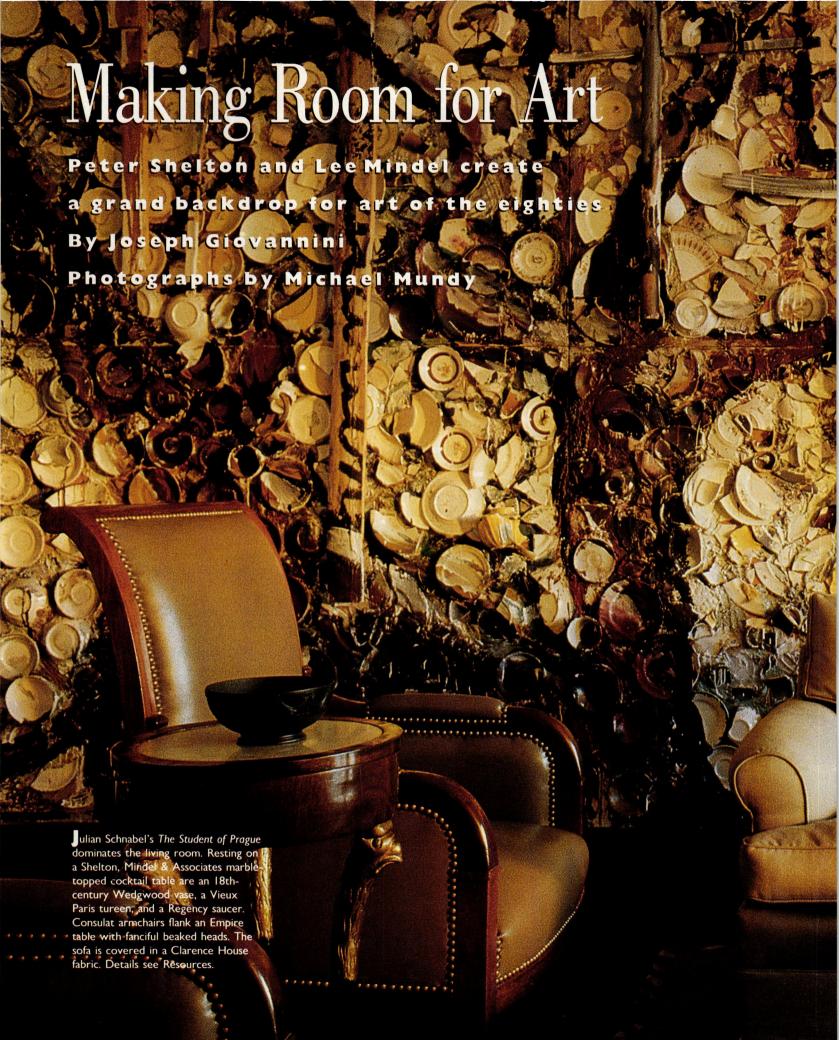
cypresses form a dense wall until one arrives at iron gates leading onto the open hillside. There, between newly planted cypresses, steps of crushed terra-cotta roof tile imbedded in a rosy concrete are held firm by railroad-tie risers, and a predominantly blue floral border rambles among the tree trunks. The wild profusion of plumbago, Mexican sage, cornflowers, white alyssum, fuchsia ice plants, freeway daisies, and wild poppies is also droughtresistant. On a plateau at the top of the steps, a Doric temple stands within a semicircle of oaks near a recently completed Greek amphitheater. There is a suggestion of Hollywood here: the Corinthian proscenium columns are salvaged fiberglass film props. The semicircular tiers of seats are rows of automobile tires half-buried in earth and covered over by a growth of ice plants. Another line of cypresses marks the wings. For a recent evening of amateur theatricals, family and friends came dressed as Olympian gods.

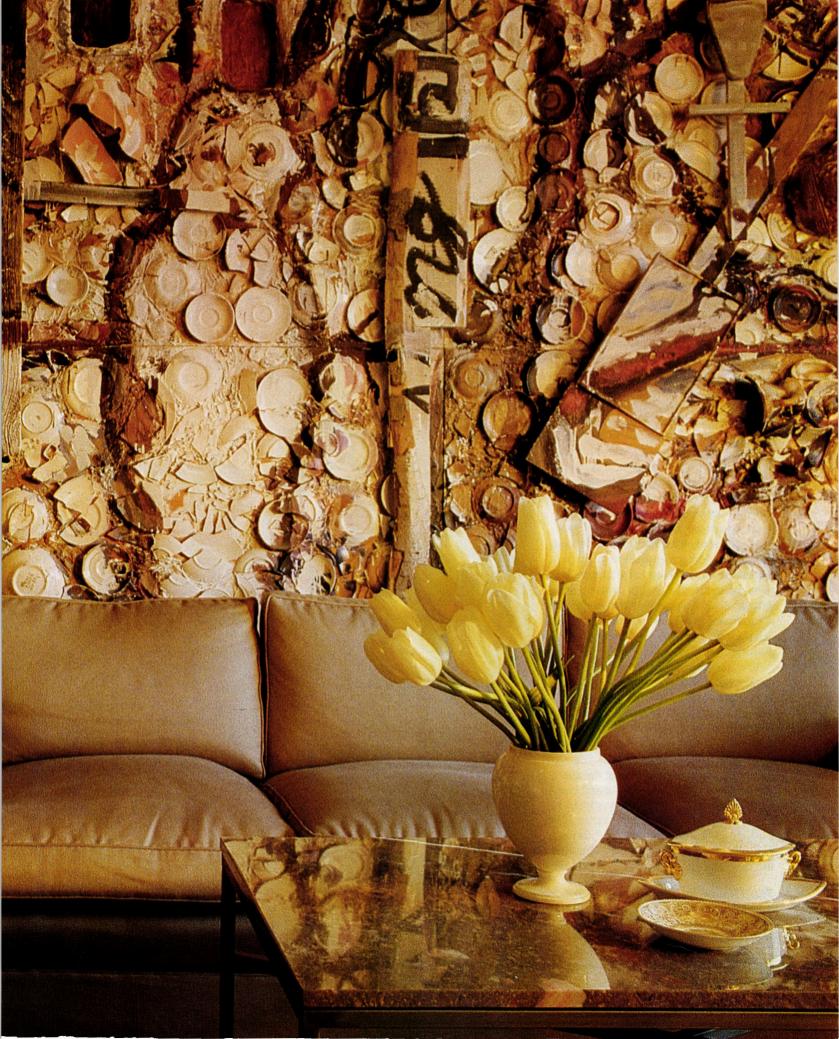
s one looks back down the hillside, the slopes are crisscrossed with new allées of olive and golden rain trees on one side and jacaranda underplanted with statice on the other. A circle of banana trees, Brazilian peppers, shocking-pink geraniums, and purple statice composes a living garden folly dubbed the Temple Eliana, in honor of one of Mrs. Vanderlip's granddaughters.

The guesthouses, which Elin Vanderlip designed herself in the shape of towers or Italian roadside houses, also resemble garden follies. Private garden enclosures feature olive trees on stilts, a Chinese moon gate, (Text continued on page 172)

Amid an enclosure of winter jasmine, left, a terra-cotta statue of Winter. Above: Clusters of century plants in the drought-resistant landscape. Below: Crowned by a replica of a Della Robbia Madonna and Child, the north entrance opens onto a formal courtyard parterre of clipped box with standard roses, gardenias, and calla lilies in terra-cotta pots.







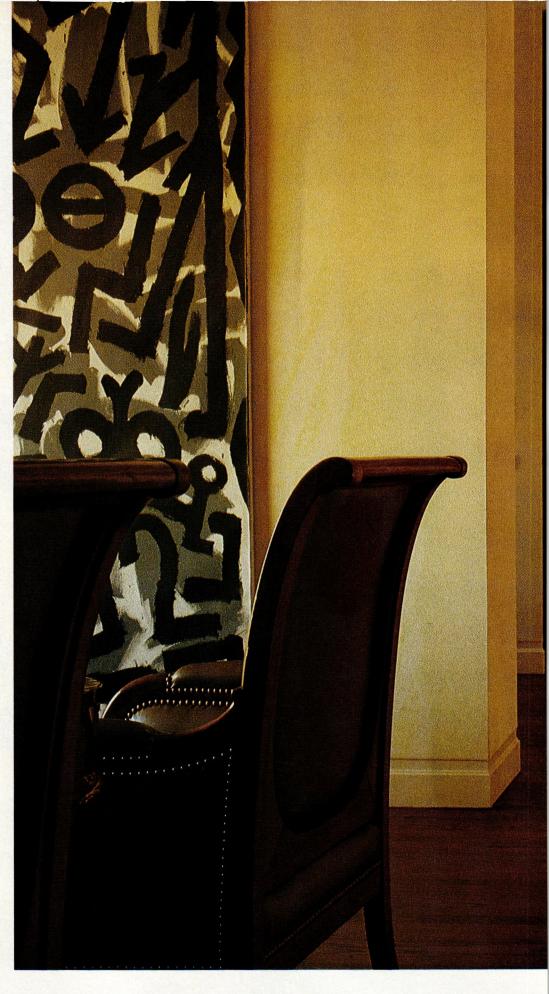
Jerry Spiegel and his wife, Emily, were looking for a Manhattan retreat from their Long Island house, two thoughts prevailed. They insisted on a view, and their collection of large-scale art insisted on headroom. "We found several spectacular apartments on Park Avenue but none with the view," he recalls. "This one on Fifth had the view but not the architecture. We bought it instantly. The ceiling had height."

Jerry Spiegel has seen a lot of houses in his day—since the late 1940s he has been one of the most prolific builders on Long Island. (His career, he says, started on his uncle's potato farm—'a little building here, a little building there.") But when he surveys his newly renovated apartment, its thoughtfulness gives him pause. "Everything you see," he says, "has a design to it and a reason."

For New York architects Peter Shelton and Lee Mindel most of the designs and reasons stemmed from the fact that the Spiegels' weekend apartment would really be used as a private museum. The couple often lend paintings for exhibitions, and they rotate the art on their walls frequently. Out-of-town museum groups visit regularly, as do artists. That the full-floor apartment is located on a stretch called Museum Mile is only coincidental to its niche in a larger New York ecology of art, artists, patrons, galleries, and gallery visitors. Mindel and Shelton knew they had to present the museum-quality works well: it was a debut for the collection in a discerning and potentially critical city.

The question was how to transform stately but conventionally boxy spaces into comfortable living quarters that still suited canvases scaled to the lofts in which they were painted. "The spaces can't be too open or you lose the paintings, but if they're too closed, you stifle them," says Mindel. "And the apartment had to be understated to avoid competing with the art. Still, we wanted to retain the grandeur of Fifth Avenue, but how do you achieve a grand design without looking retro?" Complicating the task was the issue of taste: despite

An inlaid oak and walnut path (dubbed the Yellow Brick Road by Lee Mindel and Peter Shelton) in the entrance gallery leads past a Donald Judd sculpture to Anselm Kiefer's Wood Room. A painting by A. R. Penck hangs in the adjoining living room.







their contemporary paintings and their Richard Neutra International Style house on Long Island, the couple wanted an "old-world design."

When Emily Spiegel answers the door, she offers a warm smile and an assist with briefcases and umbrellas. Since the early 1980s, when the couple started acquiring contemporary works, she has guided a collection that has become one of the eminent ensembles in the country. And she is protective: here, as in any museum, objects with sharp corners are tactfully closeted.

n the long entrance gallery, its wood floor inlaid with oak and walnut to resemble limestone, a small but impressive group of canvases by German artists Sigmar Polke and Anselm Kiefer greets the visitor. The hostess and resident curator leads the way, walking freely through an apartment that has high substantial walls but flowing space around them. Each area has two or more ways in and out, and the multiple openings encourage random paths. Having eliminated corners by keeping walls from meeting, the architects have created different angles from which to see each room and painting. The resulting parallax sets up unexpected relationships that generate small visual epiphanies for the Spiegels: "Look at the Judd against the Salle and then the Salle against the Baselitz," she says, virtually miniatured next to an apocalyptic tableau of smashed plates by Schnabel. "Julian does everything big, everything outsized."

Emily Spiegel often moves the paintings, careful always for the right fit of artwork, space, and sequence. A small canvas of a skull by Gerhard Richter is secreted behind a fluted column. *Corporate Wars* by Robert Longo—a teeming metal relief of suited figures climbing and claw-

Russian Empire candlesticks and a Vieux Paris tureen form the centerpiece on a Louis XVI table, above left, in the dining room. Behind Italian Empire chairs is David Salle's Zeitgeist Painting #2. Left: Armchairs converge before a fire in the sitting room. Ross Bleckner's Brother, Brother rests on a limestone mantel carved in Italy. Right: Project architect Randall Pregibon constructed a hinged wall that provides a small-scale gallery for photographs and can be opened all the way to unite the dining room and the living room beyond. The painting is Gerhard Richter's Two Candles.



ing their way to success—sculpts the space in a back gallery. "It's the art that you have trouble with that gives you the most pleasure later on," notes Jerry Spiegel.

The collection is arranged in areas organized to encircle the elevator core. Guests move from painting to painting, room to room, without having to retrace their steps, as in a well-planned museum. To make the spaces kinetic, the architects created large architectural patterns—coffers in the beamed ceilings and inlay in the floors—and shifted them into subtle cubistic compositions of overlapping planes. Elegantly proportioned antiques—French Consulat, Empire, and Directoire pieces that emphasize structure over fabric and pattern—anchor the rooms.

he bones of the apartment prevail not only because the architects have toned down the decoration but also because the engineering is hidden. Mindel cites 165 clustered spotlights, all on dimmers; hollow walls for art storage; and plywood backing for the plaster walls to facilitate hanging. The biggest window, facing Central Park, swivels in to accommodate works of art that the elevator can't.

With little visual competition from the the architecture and furniture, the paintings—large enough to be nearly environmental—quickly condition the eye and mind. From this apartment the view to the clifflike row of buildings along Central Park West and the reservoir below seems like another element in the collection. When the scrimmed shades on the windows are drawn, the scenery transforms into a luminous Turner.

Facing this landscape but gesturing to a sour-colored Brice Marden on the wall behind her, Emily Spiegel reflects, "These paintings are tough. Many of them aren't figurative or representational but about concepts. There's pain in buying work that is not simply beautiful. Art gives me ideas. It's changed my sensibility. When I hear music now, I see paintings."

Editor: Heather Smith MacIsaac

The architects, with associate Helen Elkner, created a neutral shell of cream hues in the master bedroom to enhance the Spiegels' revolving collection of large-scale paintings. Displayed on the far wall is David Salle's Footman. A quilted Pratesi coverlet and walls upholstered in fabric from Manuel Canovas add to the cocoonlike aura.





## Island of Calm

Chessy Rayner's Saint Martin retreat is a study in elegant simplicity By Barbara Howar Photographs by Jacques Dirand



In the living room the 19th-century Anglo-Raj mahogany furniture borders a Turkish Ushak rug. Japanese Seto ceramic plates, c. 1820, are displayed on a custom-made oak table. Two sculptures by Betty Parsons adorn the walls.

Opposite: From the pool one can gaze across to the island of Saba. Details see Resources.







aribbean houses ought to hold to the same standards demanded by a persnickety visitor to a family of bears: nothing too soft or too hard, too hot or too cold, too pretentious or simple, and never overly formal or sloppily

casual. Tropical abodes, in fact, should be like Chessy Rayner's in Saint Martin: just right.

Situated serenely atop a cliff on the French side of the island, the one-story white coral dwelling is private yet accessible with all the amenities and little maintenance but absolutely no ostentation. Which is not to say elegance is absent—there is indeed plenty of the unstudied variety characteristic of Chessy Rayner, who with her friend Mica Ertegün founded the interior design firm of MAC II.

Neither the house nor its owner grabs the visitor by the lapels. Both are simply inviting and greet

guests with the statement that it's not only acceptable but desirable for them to do as much or as little as they like. Opportunities abound, but there are no forced marches through shops or over golf courses, and few stray beyond the French border into the Dutch gambling casinos. Instead, some sluggards have been known to hibernate for days. Such relaxed attitudes are derived

in part from the physical layout of the house as well as its furnishings, which Rayner has gathered from around the world and grouped with her remarkable eye for harmony and easy elegance. Totally without contrivance, it's as if the house just sprang up amidst the bougainvillea and hibiscus, complete with totemic sculptures by Betty Parsons and spare Japanese Seto ceramics tastefully scattered about.

Still, it's not the small treasures that catch the eye upon entering from the front courtyard. The immediate and enduring joy is the bright grand parlor with its tray ceiling that slopes toward a wide covered terrace and a startling panoramic view of the sea. Strategically positioned throughout are wicker chaises with crisp cotton cushions, Turkish rugs, and expansive Anglo-Raj mahogany sofas conducive to conversation or indolence. Books are stacked on simple trestle tables made on the island; reed baskets hold cassettes, magazines, or towels, making whatever's needed conveniently at hand. Solitude is stored in tucked-away corners, sun-filled or shaded; even the pool, jutting out over the cliff, has ample space for swimmers to go it alone.

Off the vine-tangled walkways connected to the main veranda, each bedroom has a sheltering entry area and a sizable bath and dressing space. The mosquito netting above the beds is mostly for effect, and



The muted earth tones of a Turkish rug, top, set off the crisp white of painted wicker furniture and muslin curtains on the porch. Above: The pool with the guest wing beyond. Opposite: Doors leading to the French porch are opened to reveal the encroaching garden. Straw hats and flippers hang on an Anglo-Raj hatstand.



ceiling fans create atmosphere as well as breezes. Were there beaded curtains at the doors instead of louvers, Sidney Greenstreet might part them to enter.

ut for all its laid-back exoticness, the Rayner house smacks of order and efficiency, of being ready at a moment's notice to expand or contract to accommodate the unexpected. In fact, on many occasions the parlor has embraced such seemingly disparate groups as British rock stars, Italian couturiers, sixties radicals, and Hollywood moguls—the

ragtag mix who regularly wash up on the balmy shores.

The kitchen, modern but user-friendly, can bear the traffic. Unless it is temporarily commanded by a local cook and butler, the willing guest is free to join the hostess there in turning out seemingly effortless buffet lunches served on the porch, as well as the occasional seated dinner. But part of the fun of the thoroughly French enclave of Saint Martin is the variety of little waterside restaurants well worth the effort of putting on shoes. In the small village of Marigot alone, dozens offer as fine a fare as any commensurate spot in the south of France and without the rampant rudeness of the mother country.

One of the best bets on the island is La Samanna, long considered exceptional among the exclusive resorts in the Caribbean. Though neither seen nor heard from the Rayner villa, the hotel is just a short amble down the hill and provides a number of advantages, namely a bilingual switchboard operator, tennis courts, a prized chef, and the choicest celebrity ogling in the vicinity. During holidays swells from the Khashoggi or Agnelli yachts cavort at the bar.

Once returned to the Rayner high ground, however, with privacy and priorities restored, sympathy can be mustered for anybody stuck below in luxury ships or hotel suites. At these mellow moments, awash in moonlight and probably something equally intoxicating, the dazzled guest might wonder if the graceful surroundings actually had been designed to his or her own just-right standards.



n the guest room, right, an Indian mirror inlaid with mother-of-pearl, bedspreads of Brazilian cotton piqué, louvered doors, and mosquito netting create an atmosphere of tropical ease. Above: Watercolors capture the native flora of the island. Opposite below: Art supplies are conveniently set out on the porch for the inspired guest.





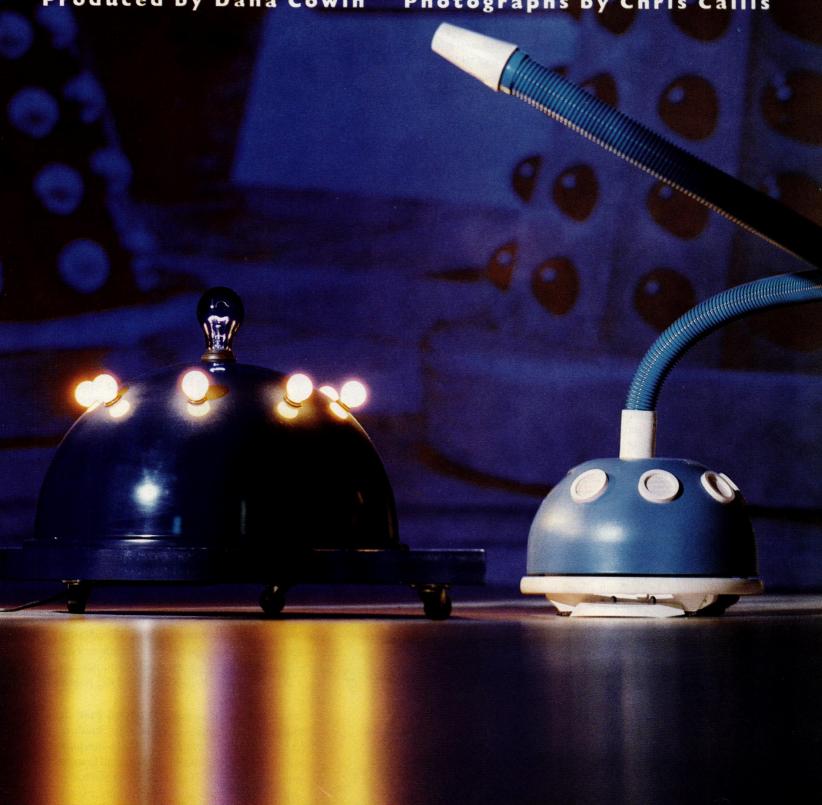


If there were beaded curtains at the doors instead of louvers, Sidney Greenstreet might part them to enter



THE WELL-TEM

No longer lost in space, mechanical wonders come down to earth to relieve domestic drudgery. By Kent Black Produced by Dana Cowin Photographs by Chris Callis



PERED ROBOT



hat was it about the robot on TV's Lost in Space that made you want to be Will or Penny Robinson if you were stranded on some distant planet? This robot not only exuded humor and power, he was also the first user-friendly machine—playing chess with Dr. Smith and baseball with Will, cutting out dolls with Penny, and still having time to beat up some aliens. One look at his Plexiglas dome, rotating grippers,

blinking lights, and sturdy armor and you knew anything was possible. Hop on, kid, next stop, twenty-first century.

Like Mars colonies or light-speed travel, robots often represent the unfulfilled promise of tomorrow. But now technology is catching up with our fantasies. Small companies are about to unleash an army of robots of every size, shape, and function. They have come a long way in the three decades since Joseph Engelberger designed the groundbreaking General Motors assembly-line robot that, in the creator's own words, "looked like a desk with a gun turret." Engelberger's company, Transitions Research Corporation, like dozens of others, is betting on the profitability and accessibility of the consumer market for its robots, the domestic setting that has made once-outlandish appliances such as toasters, microwave ovens, televisions, and personal computers feel quite at home.

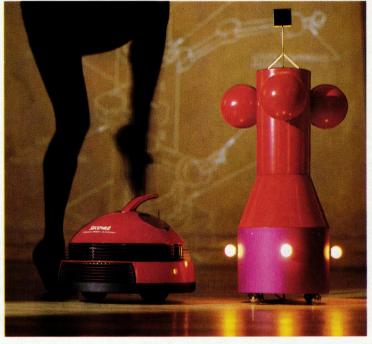
Visions of grandeur once predicted a chicken in every pot, so why not a robot in every broom closet? They will cut grass, clean the pool, do windows, and repel intruders. They will vacuum, mop, pop the Swanson's in the microwave, serve drinks, and then plug into your keyboard and act as your personal computer so you can calculate how much quality time you've saved. They will, in short, take on household

drudgery without complaint. "Actually," says Engelberger, "one of the only things we can't program into them is how to make beds."

Although the robot maid that worked for the Jetsons is a few decades away, domestic slaves such as Technical Solutions' Lawn Ranger, Bloomfield Research & Development's Securité, Arne-

Tobor (robot spelled backwards), preceding page left, was modeled on TV's Captain Video in the early 1950s. It once flashed its lights and told space stories outside department stores. Preceding page right: Technology mirrors art—Arneson Products' pool-cleaning Aqua-Droid and Dan Friedman's sculpture Neolite look remarkably similar. Details see Resources.

son's pool-cleaning AquaDroid, and TRC's Star vacuum cleaner for Electrolux AB of Sweden operate in surprisingly diverse and efficient manners. The tiny Star—whose designers admit looks like a "crummy little vacuum cleaner because we didn't want to frighten away customers with something too futuristic"—will vacuum a room according to an equation based on a star pattern. The Lawn Ranger is informed by sensors. Once the unit has been manually run around the perimeter and any obstacles, it automatically seeks out taller grass. The battery-operated Securité is free-roaming; its system is alerted when unaccountable movement occurs. It can be programmed to call the police or turn on all the electronic gadgets in the house. Simplest of all is the AquaDroid, whose preset gears are activated by



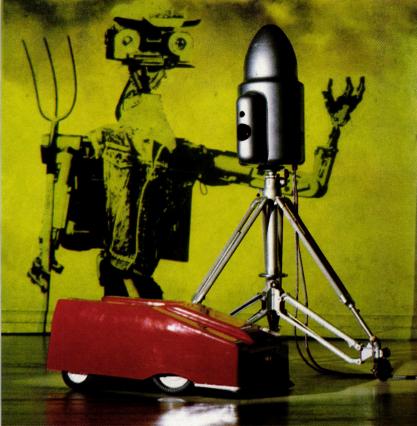
As early as 1958, "Christmas Fun with Electronic Robots" was proclaimed by Popular Electronics, above left. Left: Bloomfield's beetlelike Securité droid can set off alarms, call the police, or turn on the Jacuzzi. Dan Friedman's sculpture Power Tower, to its right, looks even more robotic but is simply a lamp. Below left: Gaetano Pesce's cabinet is ready for takeoff.

waterpower. Some may seem mere toys, but all are robots by dint of their semi-independence.

The concept of imbuing inanimate objects with life has existed in European lore for centuries—Rabbi Judah Loew built his golem of clay in the sixteenth century and in the nineteenth Mary Shelley's Frankenstein terrorized the good burghers. But the

term itself is traced to the 1920 play *R.U.R.* (Rossum's Universal Robots), by Czechoslovakian writer Karel Čapek, in which robots revolt against their human oppressors. Robot comes from *robota*, a Czech word translated as "forced labor." This tradition of humanlike machines has given us such futuristic images as Roy Batty in *Blade Runner* and Big Arnold in *The Terminator*.

But androids have a separate appeal from the "bubbleheaded booby" at which Dr. Smith directed his ire in *Lost in Space*. These machines were born from the marriage of fact and fantasy, equal parts *Popular Electronics* and *Buck Rogers*. They were speculative inventions, expressions of space-age optimism that grew out of the emerging technology of the 1930s and came into



Robots will vacuum, mop, pop the Swanson's in the microwave, serve drinks, and calculate how much quality time you've saved



their own with the launching of the Gemini space program. Today, that early vision still exerts its influence. Artists and designers are creating more playful images of robots than the inventors of the next high-tech droid. The cabinet by Gaetano Pesce, Canetti clock, and Toby toy equipped with a gun are certainly more robotic-looking than their mega-mental counterparts.

"Because of the science fiction nature of robots, people expect them to look and perform as they do in the movies," says Douglas Bonham of the Heath/Zenith Co., whose instructional robot, Hero 2000, looks like a combination of R2-D2, a slot machine, and a trash compactor. "I feel we are at least a couple of decades away from that reality." John Bloomfield, developer of Securité, agrees: "Design has to be totally subservient to func-

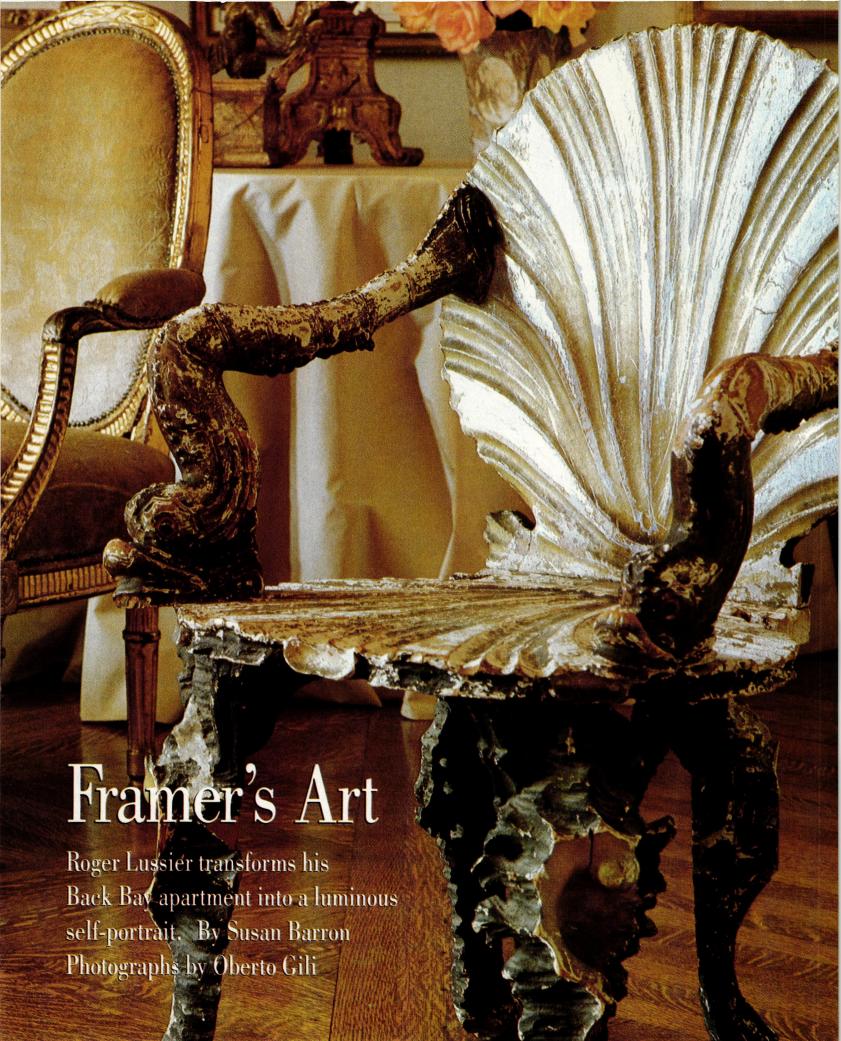


tion to make these practical and affordable. It's easy to get weird with the design and stick on some blinking lights. It looks good but doesn't do anything."

Dan Friedman, a New York artist who showed a collection of futuristic furniture at the Art et Industrie gallery this past year, laments the dearth of inspired robotic design. "American design in the thirties and fifties excelled because of its futuristic vision. There was a romantic notion then that I think is missing today, an optimism and fantasy about what the future would hold."

Granted, few have the Art Deco coolness of a Hamilton blender or the wizardry of the robot star of *Short Circuit*, but many exhibit a whimsical quality. The Mercury Vac-Sweep for swimming pools looks sleek and slightly dangerous like a stingray. Skywasher, the high-rise window (*Text continued on page 172*)

The low-lying Lawn Ranger, top left, from Technical Solutions seeks out tall grass. The Silver Bullet, designed by Chris Callis and Bill Boston, is a light that follows models as they move. In the background, one of the most sophisticated movie robots to date, the star of Short Circuit. Above: Toby, a toy from New Bright, opens fire on a clock locked in a robot's body. Left: Heath/Zenith's educational Hero 2000 lifts, spins, walks, and talks. The design of the fan in its grip makes a nod to adorable E.T.





Roger Lussier, reserved and soft-spoken, has occupied an apartment in the heart of Boston's Back Bay for the past eight years. But he still moves through these rooms as if beholding them for the first time. With a visitor, he pauses on occasion to touch a fringe of silk, gaze at a picture, or ponder possibilities. "The mood changes," he observes cryptically, "but the mood is always the same."

Lussier's apartment, which once belonged to photographer Richard Avedon, is in a Victorian building that used to be an apartment hotel with an adjoining town house. Lussier first viewed it with John Bremer, a management computer consultant, who found it "complicated, uninteresting, and badly colored." For Lussier, however, it was redeemed by wonderful space and the feel of old Boston. Though the living room overlooks the treetops, one might barely notice; the predominant view within is Lussier's. His compelling vision evokes memories of Coco Chanel; her apartment, in the words of her friend Hervé Mille, was "the decor of her personality."

Lussier, who owns a print and framing studio, modestly concedes that he is an artisan, but chafes at the label decorator. When he has tried to duplicate his efforts for others, he says, he has failed: "It takes an unusual temperament to accept something this soft. This is my little workshop." Standing in the entrance hall, Lussier traces a round marble table with his fingers. Suffused with the intimacy of art, it is a quiet, graceful room, suggestive of a grotto. A grouping of stone dogs, ball finials, and urns flanks a doorway to mystical effect. Lussier likes the repetition of form and texture. He has arranged the unexpected on two opposite walls: a wire candelabra, a Venetian lion, a soft gold bow

In the living room muted gray walls are the perfect foil for the glamour of a zebra skin rug, a Venetian chandelier, an assortment of gilded frames, and a Louis XIII camelback

sofa upholstered in a silk velvet leopard print from Brunschwig. Early 18th century French bronze candlesticks and delft garnitures rest on a 19th-century Italian table. Inset: Lussier suspended an 18th-century Italian mantel mirror from a sash of the same Chinese silk he often uses on his mats. Another gilt frame is attached to the mirror with a carved bow.





In the pale light, these objects take on a talismanic power



Pieces of an 18thcentury English creamware dinner service were mounted on a dining room wall. The 18thcentury Italian gilt altar candlesticks transformed by the addition of gilt iron arms—dominate a Louis XIII fruitwood table. Italian, French, and Swedish chairs are carried in from the bedroom for dinners. Antiques dealer John Andersen, from whom Lussier bought his finest Scandinavian pieces, inspired him to paint the chairs gray.



suspended from a silk tassel. Nothing jars or overwhelms. In the pale light, these objects take on a talismanic power.

Then there is the subtlety of Lussier's palette. His bedroom is awash in the palest apricot. The walls in the entrance hall are combed gray and white, colors whose value he came to appreciate through the decorative painting of Scandinavian antiques dealer John Andersen. A washroom is papered in a golden orange that Lussier suitably terms magical. Its precise shade, however, is elusive. Asked how one would describe it, Lussier smiles enigmatically. "One doesn't have to," he says.

he living room draws much of its effect from texture. A sofa in muted brown satin, an armchair in a tawny gold satin, a French camelback sofa covered in leopard silk velvet, and an Italian grotto chair are arranged in comfortable proximity. A nineteenth-century gilded table holds eighteenth-century French bronze candlesticks.

Lussier began collecting objets d'art and furniture in his youth. "Antiques were easier to find then," he says, acknowledging the influence of the late Raymond Mentzer, a Worcester, Massachusetts, antiques dealer. For the most part, Lussier does not buy names. A connoisseur by in-

Beneath a wall-hung Victorian fire board in the kitchen, above, an American Empire sideboard painted white holds pressed-tin tulip bouquets, an English lion's-head jar, and a collection of porcelain dishes. Below: A German Baroque surround frames the doorway to the pantry where a French marble store counter supports an Italian tulipière. The wall and floors were marbleized by decorative painter Cheryl Battaglia.



stinct, he is indifferent to status, susceptible only to feeling. He loves France but gravitates to Italy. When he describes the Venetian chandelier in his living room as colorless, he pays it a high compliment.

Like all self-created worlds, Lussier's is rooted in childhood. Growing up in Worcester, he had an aversion to the commonplace, a penchant for surprise. He remembers the lure of closed doors, the anticipation of opening them and perhaps coming upon something. At age ten he was drawn to his aunt's house for reasons that prefigured a philosophy. "There were few adornments, few furnishings," he recalls. "But they were beautifully arranged. It was a nice polite home."

Still insistent upon magic, he pauses before opening the door to a small room: "It was once an overrun cloak closet. An unsuspected area." Now it has a painted stone floor. A soft green fixture of beguiling simplicity hangs from the ceiling. On the far wall, one lone object, a painted Venetian side chair, occupies a preordained place. Its presence seems less a statement of decor than of destiny. The apartment abounds in quiet revelations. He avoids placing mirrors at eye level, hanging them at heights that reflect the details of a drawing or candlelight.

For more than 25 years he has been col-



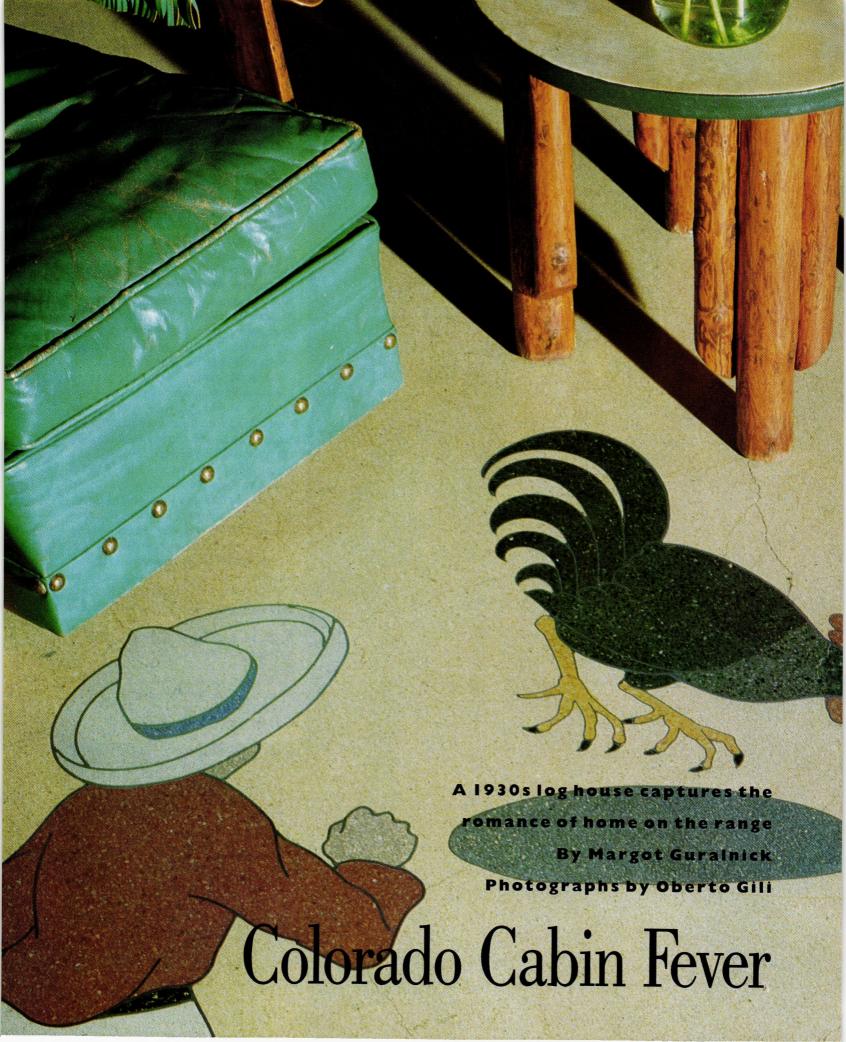


lecting drawings-pen and ink, crayon, charcoal-which he frames in uncommonly beautiful ways. The mattings are fresh and simple; the frames, some whitewashed in the manner of the French Impressionists, others fabric covered. The bedroom hall is populated with Palladian black and white engravings in white frames. A print of St. Paul's Cathedral is wrapped in a thin gray sash that Lussier calls a whisper. Above the living room mantel is Conger Metcalf's drawing of an urchin, a gift from the artist. In characteristic defiance of the obvious, Lussier rejected gold. Instead, he framed it in distressed silver leaf over red clay. Lussier believes in the power of details, but he also knows when to leave things alone. "The entrance hall is a wonderful void," he says. "If something makes it complicated, I remove it. Sometimes I stand here and feel that nothing is around me. Then I look again and it is there."

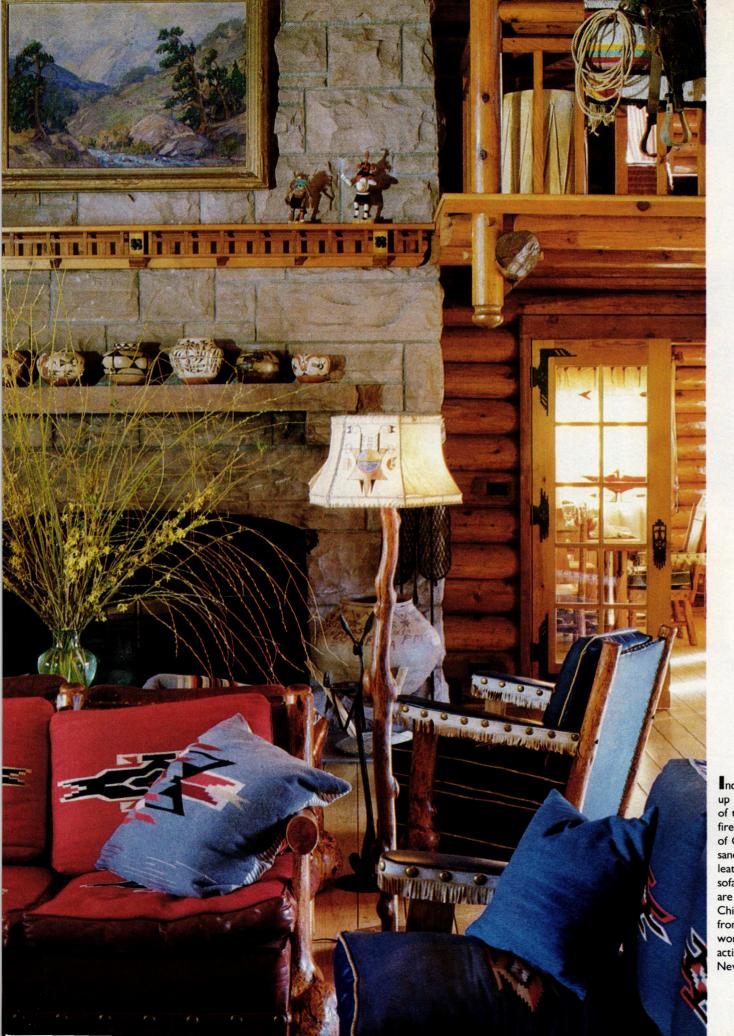
A sense of ambiguity pervades the dining room, at the center of the apartment, which Avedon used as his darkroom. Now a collection of English porcelain hangs on the far wall. Lussier loves the echoes here, particularly those of forks hitting plates. "It's decadent," he says laughing. "If it's twenty past the hour and everything goes quiet, I'll (Text continued on page 172)











Indian pots line up on the mantel of the living room fireplace constructed of Colorado sandstone. The leather-upholstered sofa and armchairs are faced with 1930s Chimayo weavings from the Ortega workshop, still active in Chimayo, New Mexico.





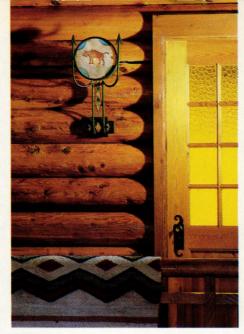
to sink some of his savings into the wide open spaces nearby. And so with the purchase of ninety prime acres of valley, Sumers called upon Thomas Molesworth to deliver the ultimate rancho deluxe.

n a grassy bluff overlooking the Roaring Fork River a two-story log structure took shape quickly, thanks to a Minneapolis company that milled, notched, and numbered all of the timber before packing it off for on-site assemblage. More chalet than cabin, this kit of parts gave Molesworth fifteen rooms in which to show his colors, and he corralled craftsmen from all over to execute his designs. Italian artisans laid terrazzo floors patterned with scenes of cockfighting, flamenco dancing, and broncobusting. A German blacksmith based in Denver forged all the hardware, from the four chandeliers that dangle arrowheads to the one-of-a-kind strap hinges on every door. Hand-stitched rawhide lampshades arrived by train from Oakland, California. And out of Molesworth's own Cody workshop came his signature cowboy furniture, which elevated all of the other elements from mere curios to essential parts of a finely orchestrated composition.

Electric-blue and oxblood-red leather sofas and armchairs with massive burl legs set the tone in the living room where Nava-jo rugs were slung trading-post style over a second-story balcony. Thunderbirds spread their wings on chairbacks and Chimayo wool curtains in the dining room where the white leather topped table was set with Fiesta ware. In each of the nine bedrooms gunfighters, Indian princesses, and elk beckoned from the routed surfaces of simple wooden furniture.

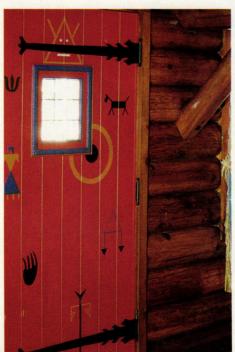
It was in this setting that Sumers, his three children, his eleven grandchildren, and a perpetual flow of guests convened every summer for nearly thirty years. Rarely did the routine alter: days were for horseback riding in the mountains, nights for soaking in the mineral springs. "I could be a cowboy or an Indian from June to September," remembers Sumers's el-

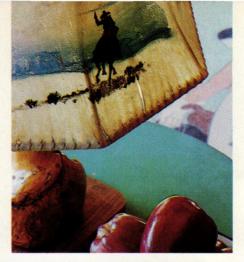
In the living room, right, vibrant Indianstyle pictograms adorn a door. Far right:
Corral scenes and cowboys decorate the footboards and chest in one of the nine bedrooms. Above right: Custom hardware, such as the owl strap hinge, sets a theme for the decoration of each room.



Molesworth's Indian-style wrought-iron and painted-mica light fixture, above, beams onto a Navajo horse blanket. Above right: Cattle stampede on the painted-hide shade of a burl lamp, while a broncobuster jolts across the terrazzo floor. Right: A wrought-iron fire screen glows with the silhouette of an Indian guiding his steed.

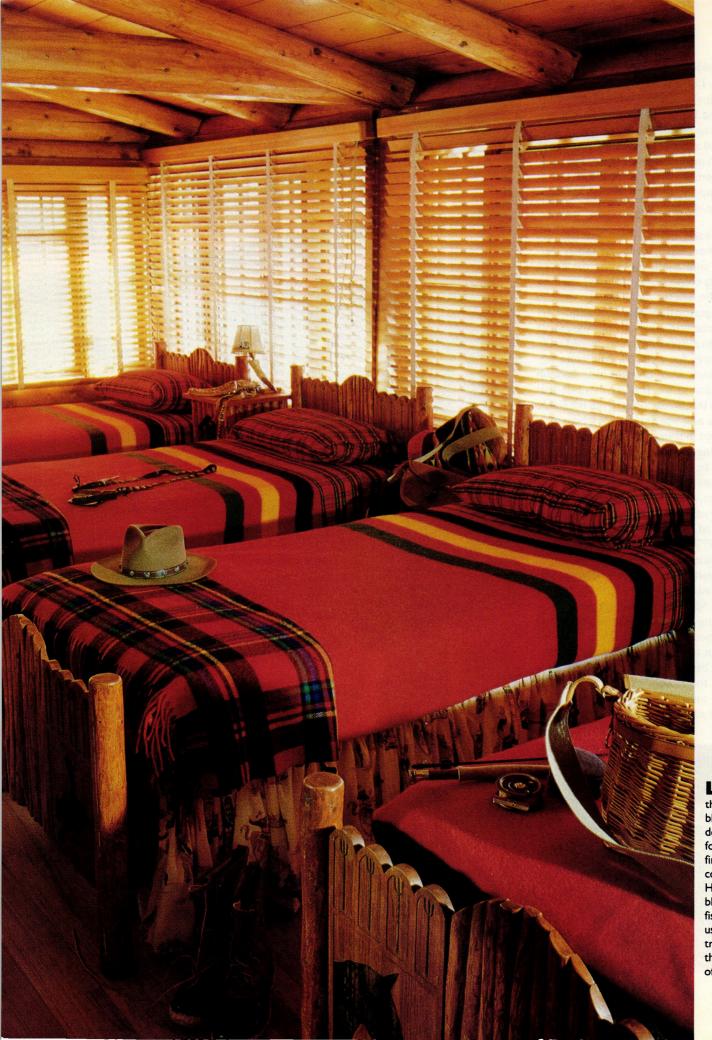












Light filters through wood blinds in the boys' dormitory where four pine and fir beds are covered with Hudson's Bay blankets. The fishing creel is used to carry trout caught in the river in back of the house.

dest granddaughter, management consultant Toby Lafferty, who as a girl dyed her braids black, pitched a tent behind the house, and learned to rope cattle. "It was an addicting place to be," she says. "People arrived and left and quickly came back again." Among those who came back was Ethel Merman, who, as local lore has it, dreamed up the story line for Call Me Madam on one of her visits.

n the early sixties, when fewer family members were using the ranch, Sumers sold it all, including the house and its contents. The buyers, an order of Catholic priests, immediately went to work tempering their playful headquarters with touches of piety. In the basement game room the pool table was pushed aside to make way for a chapel. Miniature figures of saints were brought in to hobnob with Indians in the frontier diorama that decorated the dining room. Even the stable was put to new use as a school where novices studied in former horse stalls.

Ranching and religion, however, didn't prove to be a lasting combination. The place eventually passed into the hands of developers who sold off most of the land and many of the Indian artifacts but mercifully spared the work of Molesworth, who died in 1977. Texan Laura Hunt first spotted the house in a Sotheby's real estate catalogue fourteen years ago and spent the next decade regretting that she hadn't bought it. She was on the verge of building her own log lodge when the Sumers ranch again turned up on the market. Incredulous, Hunt toured the interior and discovered the burl furniture, the pony-skin curtains, the Giacometti-like jackrabbit ashtrays, and the Chimayo cushions all still there and intact. "Wild Bill Hickok couldn't (Text continued on page 174)









FORECASTS

Beyond the Fringe

Tassels take on new twists in every area of design By Margot Guralnick

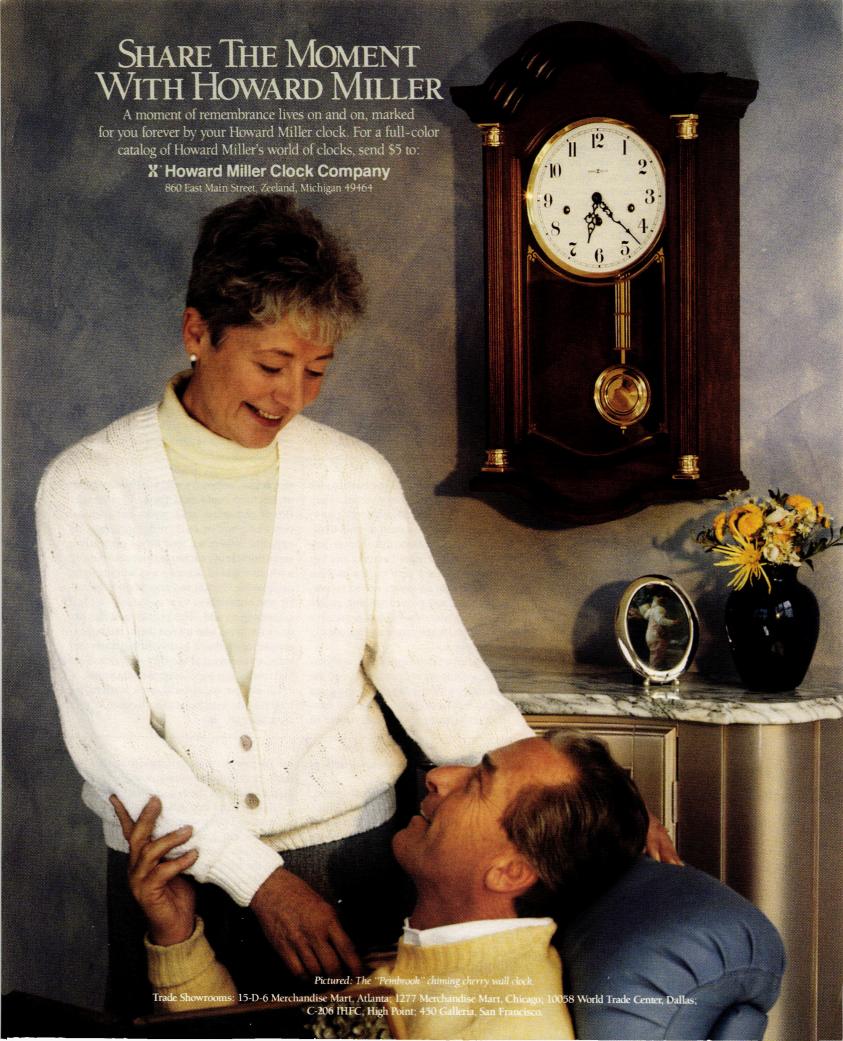
he versatile tassel, long the trim of choice for kings, cardinals, and graduates, has won new adherents of late. Applied by the fashion world in quantities that would satisfy Queen Victoria, fringe flourishes have cropped up on everything from Christian Lacroix's satin brocade shoes to Bob Mackie's gypsy-style resort wear. More tassels have been spotted trailing off linen napkins, velvet table skirts, and Baroquestyle swagged curtains. According to decorator Charlotte Moss, whose shop specializes in passementerie and other decorative accessories, tassels supply "color, texture, weight, and a dollop of grandeur." Next in line for a comeback is tassel and rope-twist furniture, an all-frills genre that was particularly popular during the ornament-strewn days of Napoleon III. Made of carved wood or cast metal, these fanciful chairs, stools, and sconces prove you can take tassels almost anywhere.

Ferronnerie scarf, top right, from Hermès. Above right: Satin brocade mules from Christian Lacroix, Paris, on a 1940s Italian gilded metal stool from **Hubert Des Forges, NYC.** Right: One of a pair of English giltwood wall sconces, c. 1810, from Florian Papp, NYC. Below right: Italian 1940s gilded metal chair from Hubert Des Forges. Far right: Tassels and trim abound on Bob Mackie's two-piece ensemble. Details see Resources.









#### **Cultivated Beene**

(Continued from page 94) room where women friends usually stay is done in delicate pastel tones. Beene emphatically states he has never used pink before in a room, but the color here was dictated by the nineteenth-century trompe l'oeil canvas panels in the bed alcove, which were bought at auction. There is a decidedly romantic pull to the room—Beene laughingly comments that guests have said it incites dangerous liaisons.

Another unprecedented color scheme occurs in the master bedroom. The walls are painted the color of papaya in order to create the perfect setting for a blue fabric that Beene first saw in Vienna and tracked down in Venice six months later. "When I painted the room, suddenly it was as if I were inside some exotic fruit. There was a glow as if from the sun, even at night."

Just as dress fabrics perform in unexpected places in Beene's world, fruit and vegetables show up in odd spots around the house. A

bowl of peppers sits on a table in the master bedroom. "Most people would put peppers in the kitchen, I guess," he says, "but I put them in the bedroom because the form and texture are so luscious. There are some colors in vegetables you don't find in flowers.' Beene's passion for flowers, particularly orchids, is also evident throughout his house where exotic stalks preside over piles of books and rare porcelains. A greenhouse was added three years ago to accommodate the two thousand orchid plants Beene has collected. Dress fabrics in his 1989 resort collection include a fresh array of embroidered and beaded blossoms. "The orchid is the only flower I cannot reproduce in fabric," he says. "It's too complex in its perfection."

Beene's passion for fabric started in childhood. "I have collected over two thousand ties since I was young, and I don't even like ties. But I can't part with them. I finally realized after all these years that I have just been collecting strips of fabric. I am fascinated by fabric, by something so flat that can be turned into form and substance. Working with fabric is like sculpting clay." Fabrics tend to recur in Beene's life and work. A silk floral print from a Lyon mill, which still employs sixteenth-century looms, was used two years ago for a group of vests and now covers a table in the guest room. In the dining room a stool is upholstered in Beene's black and white printed-silk pattern, and the entire room has become a play on that print, including the mural walls, which "look like the belly of the snow leopard."

"I have always wanted to design a print indigenous to the house," says Beene, "and this print is as close to myself as anything I have ever designed. In the end, graphics, particularly black and white, are what I relate to most. They have a clarity and balance that always works." This abstract animal print, inspired by a French schoolchild's notebook, was developed two years ago and has already been used for gloves and shoes in various collections. It will also be the signature print for his new boutique, which opens this month on Fifth Avenue. "To me that print is the direction of the nineties," says Geoffrey Beene, the American designer whose inimitable vision continues to fashion the future.

#### **Eloquent Bouquets**

(Continued from page 100) acquired throughout the world: Dutch ships had brought back the flowers, bulb by bulb, from Turkey and places east of it. Dutch adventurers had dug and dived, bartered and bargained for the curiosities of every kind that it was the prerogative of a great nation to collect. Dutch merchants had made the money that allowed them to set up as men of taste as well as patrons of learning and science.

On that level, therefore, the pronks were prime examples of "If you've got it, flaunt it." They stood not only for imaginary reorderings of the world around us but also for conspicuous consumption in excelsis. They were to the Golden Age of Holland the equivalent in our own time of a custom-built Bentley convertible, a wardrobe full of never-yetworn dresses by Christian Lacroix, and last week's record-priced item on the auction market. They went nowhere, served no particular purpose, and proved nothing except that someone, somewhere, had a massive share in Holland's newfound and apparently limitless prosperity.

But they also documented the ambivalence, the awareness of transiency, and the terror of making the wrong choices that ran throughout that archetypal consumer society. Hidden meanings were everywhere in the pronks, and every educated human being of the time could read them. Flower after flower and insect after insect had implications of good or evil, redemption or its opposite. Where we tend to see primarily a small miracle of exactitude in representation, a whole world of warning was waiting to be deciphered. Cricket and grasshopper, butterfly and bumblebee, vine and snail—all had something to add. The pronks beat the big drum for those who owned them, but not everyone forgot that it is also the big drum that signals the arrival of the Day of Wrath. Fear and foreboding were integral to the pronk.

So maybe we should stick with those ready-made bunches at the Korean corner store after all.

#### Palm Beach Story

(Continued from page 118) Mar-a-Lago's 75-foot-high lookout tower to the servants' quarters tucked away beneath the main floor, every chair, table, lamp, and bedspread, every carpet, lantern, vase, and bibelot, every item of every one of the 27 china patterns, and all 4,000 pieces of silver have been cleaned, polished, repaired, refurbished, and set back in place. Wherever upholstery or curtain fabrics were threadbare, Ivana called in Scalamandré, Brunschwig & Fils, and

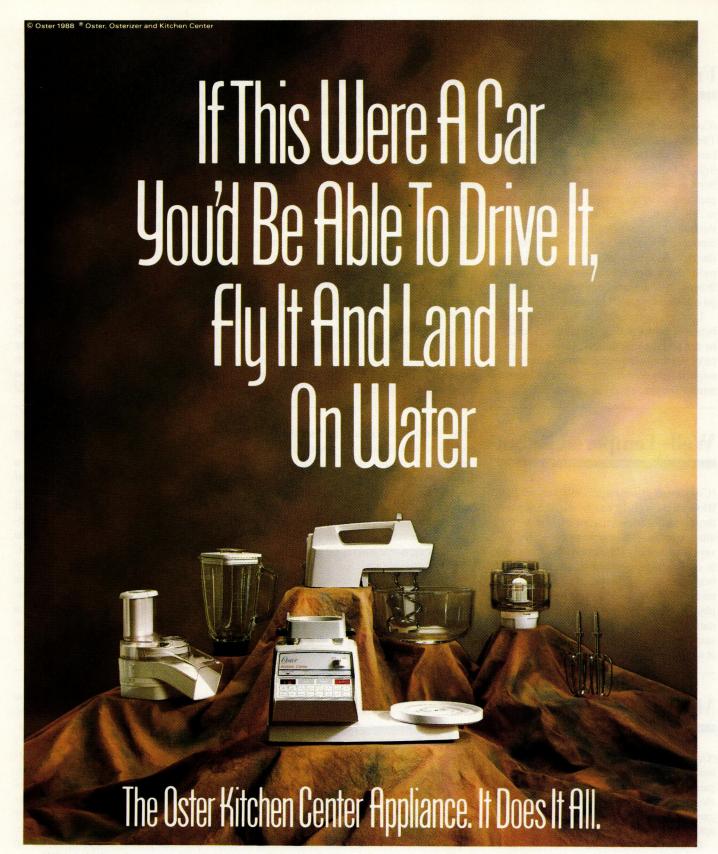
Henry Cassen to re-create as accurately as possible what was already there.

Given that the Trumps are hardly timid, their eagerness to serve as curators of Post's legacy is perhaps surprising. "The house works so well and it's done so well that we just wanted to restore it," explains Ivana. "We are secure people, so we didn't feel the need or the urge to put our personal stamp on it, because it was already very beautiful. We can put our stamp on a lot of other things which need to have it and which are not perfect." To ensure the continued perfection of Mar-a-Lago, the Trumps maintain a full-time staff of 32. Off-season that

number drops but not significantly. "It takes a very good manager and excellent help to maintain the house," reports Ivana. "And that's our strength."

Another Trump strength, as it turns out, is an unabashed love of opulence. Who else would make so fervent a commitment to rescuing the long-suffering dinosaur that Marjorie Merriweather Post left stranded on South Ocean Boulevard? Who else would choose to reopen this wildly indulgent chapter in social and architectural history by calling the 118-room Mar-a-Lago home? Palm Beach owes them one.

Editor: Susan Goldberger



It's one appliance with five versatile functions. All driven by the same power base.

There's a stand mixer powerful enough to mix even the heaviest cookie batter. A compact food processor that minces small amounts of food in seconds. A doughmaker that kneads up to three 1-pound loaves of bread at a time. A slicer/shredder with continuous feed and chute. And a 5-cup Osterizer blender as well.

But what's also amazing about this little performance machine is its low sticker price. That alone may convince you to pick one up and park it on your countertop.

#### Framer's Art

(Continued from page 157) drop a utensil. The effect is magical. The room is always beautiful and simple, and people bring in the light." In the interest of serenity, he refrains from putting chairs around the table when guests are not present. At Christmas, however, he places 36 gold ballroom chairs throughout the house. On the oval fruitwood dining table there is a pair of silver-gilt candlesticks adorned with gold rosettes. Like almost all his acquisitions, they were found in Boston. "With something beautiful, I like to go one step beyond," he says.

Lussier approaches a Victorian cedar bench of gaufré velvet. Sometimes, he says, he can lie here indefinitely, facing one of his more startling aesthetic gestures: a robust Baroque doorway with which he is on intimate terms. The piece had been lost to him for fifteen years. When it was a muddy uninteresting green, it was lent to him and later sold by George Gravert, a Boston antiques dealer. It later reentered Lussier's life, perhaps as a reward for patience: "It's a long process, but if you wait, things come to you."

The doorway, at once rugged and gentle, underwent a transformation. Painters, chipping at the surface, unearthed its original marbleizing. It was then that Lussier had a vision. He imagined a grotto extending to the serving room beyond it. "It was a nothing beige," he recalls. "Suddenly it demanded the unusual." Now, in the serving room, a collection of English creamware hangs above a French marble counter. The walls, painted by Boston artist Cheryl Battaglia, are a surreal blue green. In this corner of light and shadow, they suggest dreamwork.

Lussier escorts the visitor to a massive Dutch chest in John Bremer's bedroom and lends her a chair so she can climb to its uppermost level and glimpse a secret. There is a garden here. Lussier calls it "my porcelain maze." Created from a Bavarian centerpiece, it is a complete horticultural world invisible to visitors below. "It's wonderful up here," he remarks, craning his neck to point out a porcelain George Washington mounting his horse. "You should never make this easily accessible. You'd lose the joy."

In his own bedroom, a Swedish desk contains porcelain figurines, gilt-edged writing paper, Dutch ink drawings, a Chinese inkwell. Near the bed an antique watch is suspended from a silk sash. Lussier opens the doors of a Danish linen press to reveal the unexpected: a porcelain house rich in details, occupants, and artifacts. He has furnished it with an attic and maids' quarters. To keep the surprise fresh, he does not like to look upon it often. Nor does he wish to complete it. "It will go on," Lussier says, "as everything around it will go on. It's one's life. If you make anything a finished product, you lose the magic." 

Editor: Carolyn Englefield

#### **Well-Tempered Robot**

(Continued from page 149) washer, and Bloomfield's little red beetlelike security droid are both reminiscent of insects from other worlds. "Whenever people see it," says Bloomfield of his invention, "they want to ascribe a gender or name to it." Engelberger sees this anthropomorphism as a natural future for these new creations: "This is a physical world we've shaped for humans, so naturally robots will possess many of the same attributes." Britain's Shadow Group is at work on a domestic robot with a nonthreat-

ening humanoid design. The five foot two prototype will feature air-powered "muscles" under a pliant "skin" and the ability to replicate certain gestures, such as a shrug. No doubt it won't be long before robots will be programmed to display the characteristics of their professions. A bureaucratic droid, for instance, might be immensely round, rude, incompetent, and repeat continuously, "You're in the wrong line."

As long as machines are invented to relieve people of menial tasks, there will be those who claim this robs them of their humanity. But servitude to those tasks is the most dehumanizing of all. Surely human potential can be put to better uses than guarding

empty buildings, mowing lawns, or serving up warmed-over cheeseburgers.

By the turn of the century, robots may be a common presence in the house. At the start of a day an owner may program into the computer of the valet robot instructions for itself and the various droids on the property. At appointed hours the valet would activate the gardening droid and the housekeeping unit. Throughout the day it may serve as secretary and answering machine and scan information services for your perusal. If you are late getting home from the office, it could prepare a microwave meal and help the kids with their homework. It might even teach little Will to throw a curveball.

#### **Mediterranean Light**

(Continued from page 131) and a canopy of burnt orange bougainvillea. Her own courtyard is a formal parterre of clipped box in circles within octagons. Terra-cotta pots with gardenias and roses are placed against the apricot-colored stucco of the wall.

On the south side of the house, columns of magenta bougainvillea frame the entrance. There the brick Hortensia Terrace facing the sea, patterned after a similar terrace at the Villa Aldobrandini in Frascati, displays pots of richly colored hydrangeas. Twisted marble columns terminate parallel rows of olive trees, whose lacy foliage dapples the sunlight over stone dining tables. At the other end of

the brick terrace, a terra-cotta statue of Winter framed by winter jasmine presides over a rose garden with potted pittosporum shaped into parasols. Statues of all four seasons overlook a swimming pool surrounded by a hedge of white oleander, rosemary, and hibiscus. All of the statues were imported from Impruneta, the terra-cotta capital of Italy. The decorative pots came in the 1920s in a single shipment from the same source.

Much of the rest of the vast original Vanderlip property has lost its landscaping through the neglect of other owners, but in the present eleven-acre environs of Villa Narcissa the tradition of the Italian Renaissance-style garden of the twenties reigns supreme with stone pines, parasoled magnolias, an herb garden, and hedges of jade. Just as Mrs. Vanderlip single-handedly initiated

the restoration in France of the Bouguereau ceiling in the Grand Théâtre of Bordeaux, the Brunetti staircase murals at the Musée Carnavalet in Paris, the mill at Pontoise painted by Cézanne and Pissarro, and the balcony in Renoir's The Luncheon of the Boating Party, she has applied the arts of conservation to her family property. The scale of this achievement is apparent from the first glimpse of the entrance drive, bordered with lavender geraniums and dark green pittosporum under an umbrella of pepper trees. As Edith Wharton wrote of the villa architects of Italy, Elin Vanderlip has obtained "with simple materials and in a limited space, impressions of distance, and sensations of the unexpected, for which one looks in vain in the haphazard and slipshod designs of the present day." A

Editor: Senga Mortimer



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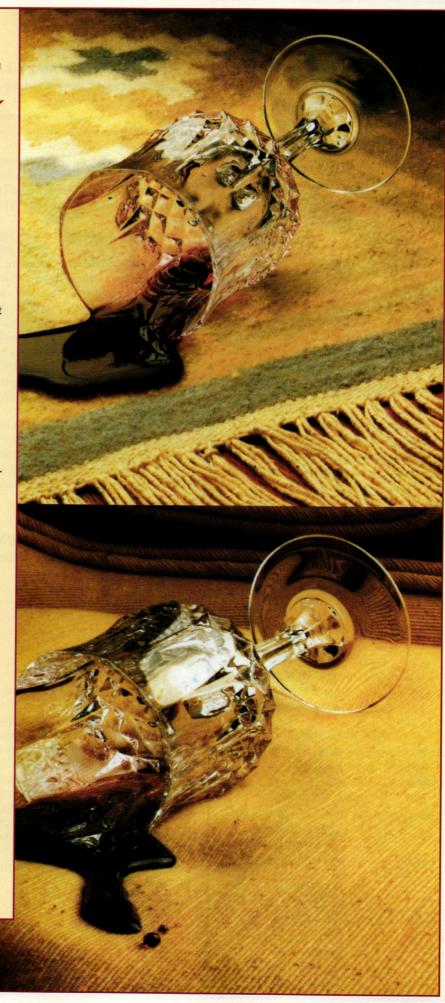
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#### **Restoration Drama**

(Continued from page 123) subtle duck-egg blue of the walls another lavish effect first perfected in the seventeenth century—flocking-is used to create a dado around both rooms at the height of a chair rail. Bands of deep claret arabesques are played off against a plain background sprinkled with whimsical stars, hand-drawn and gilded.

Here, as in all the other rooms, the furniture is Neoclassical in taste, severe yet sumptuous in this setting. An imposing pair of armchairs in red striped velvet dominate the back drawing room. In the front, a Baltic Biedermeier center table with lion's-paw feet comports with a William IV sofa. A screen in faux rosewood and mahogany with glass panels, meant to deflect the prying looks of passersby, was made to Roos's design. He had a splendidly architectural Charles X desk restored without flashy ormolu mounts to enhance its chaste grandeur.

Upstairs, the heady mix of rich materials and a subtle palette continues in the designer's bedroom. The walls are lined and hung with a glossy deep green and black damask, which also covers the tufted headboard and was made into curtains for symmetrically paired cupboards. As always, Roos's contrasting colors, in this case an intense red and the soft mingled shades of an old Aubusson used as a counterpane, are deliciously perfect. There is very little else in the room and yet the effect is one of dark and mysterious luxury, an atmosphere redolent of Fortuny's palazzo in Venice. Down in the basement Roos has his studio and office, a magic world of brilliantly dashed-off watercolor drawings, swatches of damasks, brocades, and brocatelles, and exquisite ropes and tassels.

It is curious how often people remark that Roos interiors are "historical," even though he seldom uses accurate period details. He explains that the overall feeling of richness, the use of saturated color, and the bold counterpoint of stripes and pattern-on-pattern create an impression that all too often is associated only with the past. David Roos is passionate about the creation of grand interiors today and does so without the need to present them in the terms of period style. As he says, "If you have to explain what a room is about, it hasn't worked visually." When Roos has set the scene and raised the curtain, his rooms work. The drama is complete even before the grand finale unfolds.

Editor: Judy Brittain

#### Colorado Cabin Fever

(Continued from page 166) have come up with a better set than this," she told her parents, Joan and George Bayoud. They caught the next flight out of Dallas and purchased the house on the spot.

Since then, Laura Hunt has devoted her energies to re-creating Molesworth's vision. Using the pictorial door hardware as a clue to decoration, she has reassembled the rooms in close to their original state. With the help of Denver art dealer David Cook, a new collection of pre-1930s Native American pots and rugs has been compiled to fill in the gaps. And worn furniture has been restored with the advice of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody whose exhibition of Molesworth designs opens next March at the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum in Los Angeles.

Now with all of the lodge's parts back in place, life there goes on much as it did during Sumers's time. Friends and family stream in and out. Days revolve around whitewater rafting, skiing, fishing, and leisurely meals. And, as always, the main indoor activity is simply sitting still and trying to absorb every flourish of Molesworth's derring-do.

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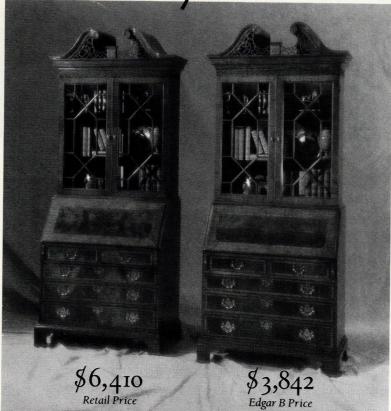
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Page 110 Wool jersey dress, \$1,590, at the Shop of Geoffrey Beene, NYC; Frederick & Nelson, Seattle; Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue.

RESTORATION DRAMA

Pages 120–23 Decoration, by David Roos, London 254-9931. 122 Gothic, 50" wide, \$247.50 yd, to the trade at Christopher Hyland, NYC; Travis-Irvin, Atlanta; Bander & Daniel, Dallas; Bill Nessen, Danie; George Wallach Antiques (retail), Los Angeles; Trade Wings, Washington, D.C.

MAKING ROOM FOR ART

Pages 132–33 Shelton Mindel cocktail table, \$2,190–\$4,905, to the trade at Luten Clarey Stern, for showrooms call (212) 838-6420. Vermandois, 51" wide, \$60 yd, to the trade at Clarence House (see above for pg 31). 136 Clarence House's Vermandois on chairs (see above for pg 31). Shelton Mindel cocktail table (see above). 138–39 Pratesi's Quiltino, \$1,200 king/queen size (see above for pg 31). Soliman fabric, to the trade at Manuel Canovas (see above for pgs 94–95). Custom carpet, to the trade from V'Soske, NYC (212) 688-1150, outside NY (800) 847-4277.

ISLAND OF CALM

Page 140 Anglo-Raj furniture, similar items at Harrington Antiques, NYC (212) 794-1076. Seto plates, similar items at Gordon Foster, NYC (212) 744-4922. 142 Wicker chairs, \$125 ea, chaises, \$395 ea, at Second Chance, Southampton (516) 283-2988. Jules cotton on chairs, 57" wide, \$66 yd, to the trade at Clarence House (see above for 31). 143 Anglo-Raj coatrack (see Harrington above). Brunschwig Plaid, to the trade at Brunschwig (see above for pgs 90–91).

THE WELL-TEMPERED ROBOT

Page 146 Dress, by Etak, \$44, at Bebe Thompson, NYC (212) 925-1122. 147 Neolite, by Dan Friedman, \$1,200, at Art et Industrie, NYC (212) 431-1661. AquaDroid, \$329, from Arneson Products (800) 369-POOL. 148 Samsung/Bloomfield's Securité available in mid 1990, call Samsung (201)

587-9600. Power Tower, by Dan Friedman, \$2,500, at Art et Industrie (see above). Koss shoes, by Diego Della Valle, at Diego Della Valle, NYC; Toby Lerner, Philadelphia. 149 Clock, by Canetti, \$120, at Bloomingdale's, NYC, Chicago, Washington, D.C., or by special order. New Bright robot, at selected toy stores. Hero 2000, \$4,500, from Heath/Zenith (800) 253-0570.

FRAMER'S ART

Page 150 Danish chair, similar at John Andersen & Co., Boston (617) 542-1515. Stylized Peony to the trade at Scalamandré, for showrooms call (212) 980-3888. 151 Frame at top, similar custom framing, from Roger Lussier, Boston (617) 536-0069. 152-53 Leopard Velvet, to the trade at Brunschwig (see above for pgs 90-91). Raindrop taffeta on tables, to the trade at Scalamandré (see above). Cocktail table, custom made to order, from John Andersen. (see above). 154 Chairs, similar items at John Andersen (see above). Chair in Directoire striped damask, to the trade at Scalamandré (see above). Floor, by decorative painter Cheryl Battaglia, Boston (617) 859-0675. 155 Haitian tin tulip bouquets, \$115–\$250, at LaRuche, Boston (617) 536-6366. Walls/floor, by Cheryl Battaglia (see above). 156-57 Marlborough Stripe wallpaper, to the trade at Cowtan & Tout (see above for pgs 108–09). Italian chairs, similar items at George Gravert Antiques, Boston (617) 227-1593. Swedish console, similar items at John Andersen (see above). Guest room curtains, Scalamandré's Raindrop (see above). Asbury wallpaper and border, to the trade at Brunschwig (see above for pgs 90-91).

**FORECASTS** 

Page 168 Ferronnerie scarf, \$175, at Hermès, (800) 441-4488. Mules, Fr7,350, to order from Christian Lacroix Haute Couture, Paris 42-65-79-08. Stool, \$875, similar items at Hubert Des

Forges, NYC (212) 744-1857. Bob Mackie dress (#458), \$2,570, at Sara Fredericks, Boston, Palm Beach; Stanley Korshak, Dallas; Amen Wardy, Newport Beach; to order at Kane's, Chicago; Martha, NYC; Neiman Marcus. Sconce, \$48,000 pr, at Florian Papp, NYC (212) 288-6770. Chair, \$1,400, at Hubert Des Forges, (see above). Garden chair, \$870, at Yale Burge, NYC (212) 838-4005. Clare Mosley's double-tassels, \$195 ea, at Charlotte Moss, NYC (212) 772-3320. Cafe Royale, 48" wide, \$135 yd, to the trade at Clarence House (see above for pg 31).

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# Gandee AT LARGE

Mr. Stanley has a gift

tanley Marcus is a jolly old man of 84 with a white beard, a big stomach, a twinkle in his eye, and a candy apple red Range Rover in which he bounces along the bone-rattling back roads of Santa Fe, New Mexico. It has been thirteen years since he officially "cut the umbilical cord" to the retailing empire his father, Herbert, cofounded in 1907 on the corner of Elm and Murphy streets in Dallas, but even after stepping down as chairman and CEO, Mr. Stanley, as the

troops at Neiman Marcus called him for fifty years, has not lost what has always been regarded as his professional passion and personal genius—the gentle art of gift giving.

"I probably know more about gifts and gift giving than anybody kicking around," confirmed Marcus, when the dusty drive from town was behind us and we were sipping lemonade on soft leather lounge chairs in the sunfilled modern house he and his wife call home three months out of the year. Having read Minding the Store, Quest for the Best, and His & Hers: The Fantasy World of the Neiman Marcus Catalogue, Marcus's autobiographical trilogy of life in the retailing fast lane, I didn't doubt my host's claim, but on the off-chance



## "Sometimes I forget who I bought something for. Then I'm in a hole"

that perhaps I did, he recounted his most recent gift-giving coup. For the September opening of architect I. M. Pei's new Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, members of the building committee decided to present the orchestra's conductor and manager with tokens of their collective appreciation. But what? After a series of respectable but unremarkable suggestions were considered and rejected, all eyes turned to the seasoned veteran on the committee, who said he'd take care of it. "I had an idea," recalled the gimlet-eyed sage. After a quick call to Isaac Stern, Marcus tracked

down an original Ravel score for the conductor—whose favorite composer is, of course, Ravel—and for the manager a signed letter from Stravinsky, which made reference to orchestra management. "There were tears in both men's eyes," reported Marcus, who added that those tears bore out his golden rule of gift giving. "My theory is that you can enhance the joy of a gift if you only think about the person—give them something that relates to what they like, to what they do. Gifts should have those added dimensions."

To ensure that he never personally falls short of that mark, Marcus remains vigilant throughout the year, and he advises others to do the same. "I buy Christmas gifts in January, April, May. Oftentimes you'll find just the right thing in the spring that you'll never find in the winter—it just doesn't exist then." The only flaw in Marcus's system is that "sometimes I forget who I bought something for. Then I'm in a hole."

Packaging is another crucial element in the perfect present presentation, according to Marcus. "Back in the thirties, during the Depression, we developed the idea of doing specially wrapped packages with specially designed paper and ribbons and gadgets and so forth to enhance the excitement of the gift." Something in Marcus's tone caused me to venture, "Kind of like foreplay?" "That's

right! Exactly!' said my host, adding that Neiman Marcus was the "first to use colored tissue paper on the inside, and we always sealed it with a little butterfly. That meant the person had to break the seal off the package."

No matter how well conceived the gift, however, and no matter how well planned the presentation, success is never guaranteed. For instance, when Coco Chanel came to Dallas in 1957 to receive the Neiman Marcus Award for Distinguished Service in the Field of Fashion, Marcus gave her a traditional Texas cookout that included a "bovine fashion show" with livestock as models. (The finale was somewhat traditional haute couture—the cow was dressed as a bride, the bull was dressed as the groom.) Although Chanel was delighted by the award and the surreal fashion show, she was less excited by the menu. To her credit, she tried to be discreet about her displeasure, but it was none-

theless revealed when she emptied her plate of barbecue and baked beans under the table—directly onto the satin slippers of her dinner companion Elizabeth Arden.

I asked if any of the presents Marcus had received over the years were particularly memorable, and he recalled the birthday, a few birthdays back, when Jean-Louis Dumas-Hermès, the head of Hermès, presented him with eighty ties. "It was a very simple thing," noted the happy recipient. "But he knew I liked Hermès ties, and it was my eightieth birthday."

With Christmas coming up, I asked Marcus if there was anything special he'd like to see under the tree this year. "I always reply to that question with a stock answer," he said. "Like Oscar Wilde, I have the simplest of tastes—I am easily satisfied with the best."

**Charles Gandee**